OLD!

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO CLASSIC GAMES

retro GAMER

SPECIAL 50TH ISSUE!

NINTENDO | ATARI | SINCLAIR | NEO-GEO | SONY | COIN-OP | MOBILE

DEVELOPERS AND **READERS** CELEBRATE KEY GAMING MOMENTS

WWW.RETROGAMER.NET

The history of GRAND THEFT AUTO

HOW A TOP-DOWN RACER BECAME THE WORLD'S BIGGEST GAME

THE MAKING OF…

GUNSTAR HEROES

TREASURE REVEALS THE TRUTH BEHIND ITS RUN-'N'-GUN CLASSIC



SEGA'S DREAM MACHINE

WHY THE **DREAMCAST** IS THE BEST SEGA CONSOLE EVER

IN THIS ISSUE OF RETRO GAMER

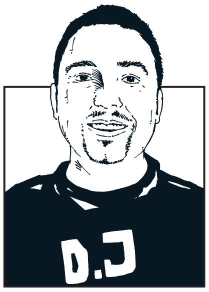
ROGER DEAN
THE FAMOUS PSYGNOSIS ARTIST LOOKS BACK AT HIS CLASSIC COVERS

THUNDERCATS
THE CLASSIC TV SHOW THAT TURNED INTO AN 8-BIT HIT. THUNDERCATS HO!

THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD
ZOMBIES, KEYBOARDS AND PINBALL. ENTER THE GORY WORLD OF SEGA'S LIGHTGUN BLAST 'EM-UP

THE RETROBATES

FAVOURITE GAME FEATURING ZOMBIES



DARRAN JONES

I know *Resident Evil 4* doesn't feature any actual zombies, but it does contain the word and it's the best game ever made (in my humble opinion), therefore it gets in via an editorial overrule.

Expertise: Killing rare fish by leaving the filter pipe unblocked

Currently playing:
Mr Driller Online

Favourite game of all time:
Robotron: 2084



MARTYN CARROLL

The original *Resident Evil*, without a doubt. The game was full of things that wanted to eat your head, but the shuffling undead dudes were by far the most frightening.

Expertise: Sir Clive Sinclair's rubbery wonder machine

Currently playing:
House Of The Dead III

Favourite game of all time:
Jet Set Willy



STUART HUNT

Seeing as *Resident Evil 4* doesn't actually have any zombies in it, per se. It has to be the *Resident Evil* remake on the Cube – the next best looking, and most atmospheric game on the console (in my opinion).

Expertise:
Games with flying bits in them

Currently playing:
Peter Jackson's King Kong: The Official Game Of The Movie

Favourite game of all time:
Peter Jackson's King Kong: The Official Game of the Movie



ASHLEY DAY

It's predictable but I have to go for the original *Resident Evil*. The hammy story, the lack of ammo, the fixed camera angles… they all made you feel like you were really in a horror film. It's the cheesy dialogue that really endears *Resident Evil* to me though. "You were almost a Jill sandwich!"

Expertise: The games of Team 17, MSX, Sega's *Shining Force* series

Currently playing:
Super Smash Bros Brawl

Favourite game of all time:
Shining Force III



PAUL DRURY

The House Of The Dead. Many early dates with my future missus began with extended zombie blasting and when we finally defeated The Magician together, I knew I'd met the right girl for me.

Expertise: Getting old programmers to confess their drug habits

Currently playing:
Buster Buddies

Favourite game of all time:
Sheep In Space



DAVID CROOKES

Resident Evil 2 may not be considered retro by some, but its chilling musical cues combined with an abundance of zombies was a ready-made advert for Pampers.

Expertise: All things Amstrad CPC, *Dizzy*, Atari Lynx and PlayStation

Currently playing:
The Last Express

Favourite game of all time:
Broken Sword



ZOMBIE CRAIG

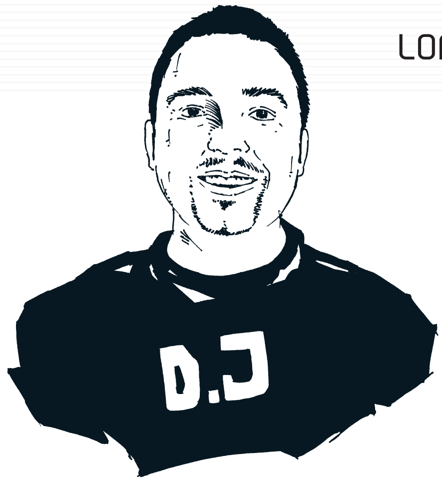
hHRNMRZHA HRZR HGhHA GBHAaGB!

Expertise:
Eating dead things

Currently playing:
Fun with entrails

Favourite game of all time:
H.E.R.O.

LOADING...



When I first heard that Live Publishing was launching a magazine called Retro Gamer, I was far from happy. After all, I'd worked hard to turn games™'s retro section into its own mini-magazine and now a rival publisher was intending to come along and encroach on my turf and no doubt get all the kudos. What a cheek!

It's now several years later and I realise that if it wasn't for Live Publishing and the efforts of Martyn Carroll, Aaron Birch and Shaun Bebbington, I wouldn't be where I am today. Fifty issues is a long time for any mag, but it's an amazing achievement for one as niche as RG and it's all thanks to the original staff. They kick-started something special under another publisher that is still going strong today and you can read about the whole story on page 40.

But that's not all. To celebrate this monumental achievement we wanted to do something a bit different, so on this page (and many subsequent ones) you'll find short stories from 50 people within the industry, each discussing the games that changed their lives.

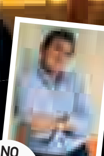
There's also an article on page 24 where 50 readers share their best gaming moments, and let's face it, if anyone deserves coverage in this mag, it's the people who helped us to get where we are now.

Enjoy the magazine

LIVES

TIM CHANEY (former US Gold sales manager)

Beach Head (Commodore 64)



NO. 01

I recall meeting Geoff Brown, who owned CentreSoft and went on to create US Gold. He gave me a copy of *Beach Head*, from Access Software. I wasn't a game player, although I had a certain obligation to check out what I was selling for Commodore, but when I played *Beach Head* I was amazed, bowled over: the graphics, the sounds, the addiction. I didn't know software like this existed!



» Load 50

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BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO CLASSIC GAMES

THE DREAM MACHINE



INSIDE

At-a-glance retro sections…



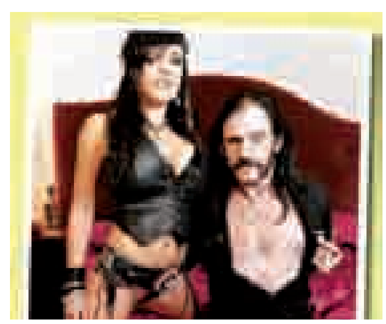
READER SPECIAL

YOUR BEST GAMING MOMENTS



ZOMBIE NATION

THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD



DESERT ISLAND DISKS

CELEBRITY SPECIAL

ESSENTIALS

THE HISTORY OF… GRAND THEFT AUTO



THE MAKING OF…



RETRORATED

GAMES LIVES



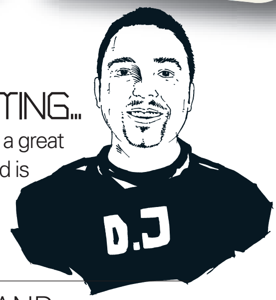
MARTYN BROWN
(Team 17 co-founder)
Pong (arcade)

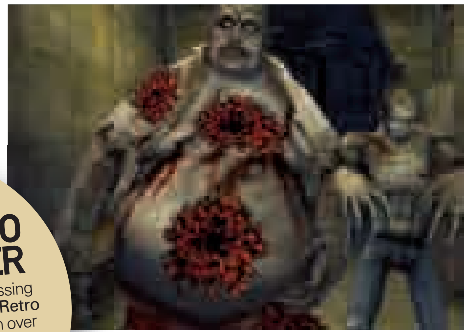
I wanted to give you three important games. The first, *Pong*, when I was about six and something magical stirred. Then, some years on, not sleeping because VCS *Space Invaders* were making sounds in my head. But then I thought, bollocks to this, there are too many. Sorry. The first, then.

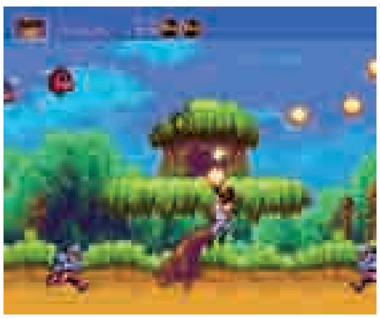
NO. 02

THE GAMES LISTING…

If it's a bumper compilation or a great new remake, then Retro Rated is where you'll find it







THE MAKING OF…
GUNSTAR HEROES



THE BIG INTERVIEW
ROGER DEAN



THE MAKING OF…
THE GREAT GIANA SISTERS

RETRORADAR

THE GUIDE

What's hot this issue…

THE UK'S FIRST MUSEUM OF COMPUTING COULD SOON BE HOMELESS

STOP AN IMPORTANT PIECE OF RETRO HISTORY FROM DISAPPEARING



A clip from Sir Clive Sinclair's *Men In Black* audition tape.



The world's cleanest NES and the world's worst peripheral. Almost brings a tear to our eyes.

We start our 50th issue on a rather sobering note. We recently learned that the Museum of Computing faces eviction in July as the University of Bath withdraws from the Oakfield campus, where the museum is based.

The national treasure, which is sponsored by Blue Click and Intel and commonly referred to as the 'UK's Silicon Valley', boasts over 5,000 software and hardware exhibits and around 1,500 specialist books, manuals and magazines.

The Museum costs the public nothing to run, and is a non-profit organisation run entirely by volunteers and donations. Remarkably, the museum has managed to garner an international reputation, with its exhibitions attracting visitors from all over the globe and a considerable amount of international media coverage.

Past exhibitions have included 'A History of Home Computers', which charted the development of the Spectrum, Atari, Commodore and Alan Sugar's Amstrad machines, and 'Calculator', which was opened by Sir Clive Sinclair and showcased his limited-edition, gold-plated Sinclair Sovereign calculator. The museum's current exhibition 'Pong to PlayStation', focuses on the history of the game console and is due to tour six other venues in the UK from April 2009.

The Museum of Computing now needs to find a new location in Swindon that will offer around 75m² of exhibition space, disabled access and 100m² of storage. Preferably, these would be adjoining premises with plenty of plug sockets and easy access for exhibition setup. Also, if anyone has 75m² of exhibition space in London that they can willingly loan the Museum for a temporary four-month period, they would really appreciate it if you could get in touch.

Or, if anyone can suggest any alternative locations, or can offer transport or funding to support the relocation, please contact the museum's curator, Simon Webb, via email at info@museum-of-computing.org.uk or on +44 (0)7939 582544.

Sadly, if the museum fails to find a suitable location, it will be forced to close its doors, locking away five years of hard work and one of the most significant collections of growing computer artefacts in the UK.

HERO OF THE MONTH



CONRAD B HART

Every month, Retro Gamer looks back at a classic videogame hero or heroine. This month it's the turn of Conrad B Hart

First appearance: *Flashback*

Distinguishing features: Khaki jacket and Levis

Weapon of choice: Tazer

Most likely to: Record a message without remembering it

Least likely to: Be a fan of lizards

Interesting fact: The game is in the *Guinness Book Of World Records* for being the bestselling French game of all time.

LOADING SCREEN OF THE MONTH

NO 32: MEGA-BUCKS



Mega-Bucks was a weird spectrum version of *Brewster's Millions*. Well, if Richard Pryor was a yellow, teleporting LA Rams fan who had to explore a colourful manor house to find objects to get past puzzles and obstacles. It's not a bad little game to be fair, and this ugly loading screen simply doesn't do the game any justice.

JUST IN WE WERE WORRYING THAT WE WOULDN'T HAVE A NEWS STORY ABOUT SEGA THIS ISSUE, BUT WE'VE JUST HEARD THAT SUPER MONKEY BALL WILL BE HEADING TO APPLE'S iPHONE. THAT WAS CLOSE...

SIDEWAYS SEUCK

ACCORDING TO ANDREW FISHER

The Shoot'Em-Up Construction Kit (SEUCK) was Sensible Software's utility to let people make their own games. The C64 version was particularly versatile considering that hundreds of vertically scrolling games were created with it. Now, programmer Jon Wells has turned things upside down – or, more correctly, modified the kit to produce horizontally scrolling games. "It was very time-consuming," admits Jon. "I had to create my own routines to work with the original, make the modifications and squeeze everything back in without compromising anything. That was the hardest part to accomplish, as there was no spare memory when I started."

The Kit is very simple – draw the sprites and background graphics, add the enemies to the level by moving them how you want them to move, and then save. Jon had tried to make a horizontally scrolling game before – called *Breakthrough* – by saving data from SEUCK and programming a new scroll routine. The difference now is that the Kit itself works horizontally; initially scrolling from left to right, with a second version to create a right-to-left scroller imminent. "After the right-scrolling version is complete I will be adding a few routines to allow the inclusion of rotating specific characters, and exploding multiple enemies, joined or unjoined. That will reduce the size of the map by about 5 per cent, however," says Jon.

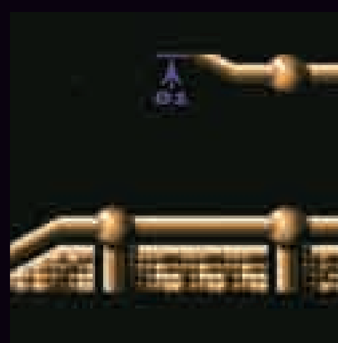
As well as the new versions of the Kit, you can read Jon's diary about developing the modifications and download a small demo game to show how it works. To find out more, visit Andrew Fisher's SEUCK Vault website, www.seuckvault.co.uk. It includes hints and tips on using SEUCK, articles and reviews, and a games archive. At the time of writing there is one new game – Richard Bayliss's *Imaginator* – created with the sideways SEUCK!



THE NEW INTRO SCREEN



ADDING ATTACK WAVES HORIZONTALLY



EDITING A LEVEL MAP

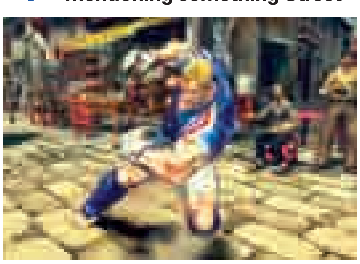


THE DEMO GAME BASED ON JON'S BREAKTHROUGH, RESCUE THE LITTLE BLUE MEN FOR EXTRA POINTS

ISSUE 50'S PREDICTABLE STREET FIGHTER IV NEWS UPDATE

OH YOU LOVE IT REALLY

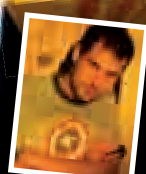
Yes, it seems that we can't go a single issue without mentioning something *Street Fighter IV* related. Seriously, we can't. So here's our new piece of information for issue 50.



It's recently been announced that two new characters have been added to the character list. The first is a French guy that dresses like a rugby player and has a haircut like the guy from *Space Ace*. Apparently he has forgotten his past, and only has three recollections: his name is Abel, he can fight with mixed-style martial arts, and he hates 'Shadowloo' (you'll probably have to form a queue there, mate). The other is a luchador called El Fuerte. He's a Mexican wrestler with huge thighs and lots of Mexican wrestling moves.

Now, we know the word on the street is that the game is based on *Street Fighter II Turbo*, set after *The World Warrior* and before *SFIII*. We can also confirm that all eight of the original fighters will return, and Balrog and Sagat may also be making an appearance. Plus, when the game does eventually find a console release, a few more familiar faces will probably be making the cut as well. We'll no doubt keep you informed.

LIVES — DAVE PERRY



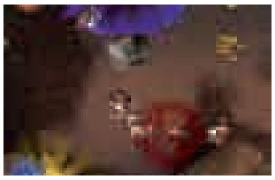
(programmer and creator of Earthworm Jim)

Jetpac (Spectrum)

Jetpac from Ulimate stopped me in my tracks. So simple, but so beautifully made. I was at the trade show (the ZX Microfair) where it was launched, and it really did just blow away the competition. The company went on to make hit after hit (really tough to compete against) and ended up selling to Microsoft many years later. It's funny how simple it looks today. Back in those days this looked like *Crysis* or *BioShock* to us!

NO. 03

LAST-MINUTE NEWS



Please include the arcade originals Eidos.

GAUNTLET COMING TO DS, AND IT LOOKS RATHER DANDY (SCOFF)

RUN THE GAUNTLET… AGAIN

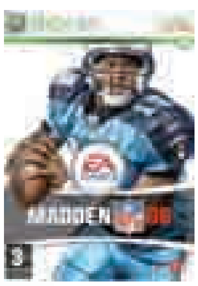
Eidos is bringing a new version of the Atari hack-'n'-slash classic *Gauntlet* to the DS. Backbone Entertainment, who some of you may know from the *Sonic Rivals* games, are behind the project. It's said to be making full use of the DS's Wi-Fi capabilities and the DS Microphone (which should come packed with the game). It will also introduce a few new gameplay styles to the series as well, the most interesting being 'baiting', which allows one player to draw enemies away from the other and attract a whole bunch of supernatural agro, à la *Army Of Two*. The game is set for a summer release in the US, so expect it to hit European shelves soon after.

WHO'S TO BLAMESTATION?

RETAIL STORE TO START DROPPING RETRO

If you've popped into your local Gamestation recently, then you may have noticed that there's something missing. Where once stood lovely boxes of retro-gaming goodness, now stands a rack of 'Raccoon City Police Dept' man bags, iPods – which you can pretty much buy more readily than milk nowadays – and belts made out of Nintendo controllers.

Yes, the only defining aspect, or USP, that separated Gamestation from every other shop that sells videogames might soon be sadly lost, with the tragic news that the retail giant is running down its retro stock across its stores. And that means the days of seeing shelves stacked with 17 copies of *Hogan's Alley*, 40 Game Boy Colors and dying Sega Saturn game boxes, seem to have finally come to an end.



Get them while they're hot

Now there are probably some business analysts out there that would argue that this is simply 'good business sense' by the games retailer, because, after all, if the retro section was making it any kind of profit, there would be no rhyme or reason to get rid of them.

Perhaps a contributing factor is the increasing popularity of online auction websites and a few internet-based import and retro-game specialists emerging – meaning that all the good stuff gets flogged on the internet, and the lovelorn *Madden*s and *FIFA*s get filtered down and collected on shop shelves.

Interestingly, if you have a look at the Gamestation website, you'll notice that it includes a retro-gaming section, and that you can still bag yourself a few classic titles by ordering online. So perhaps the intention is to keep retro games online.

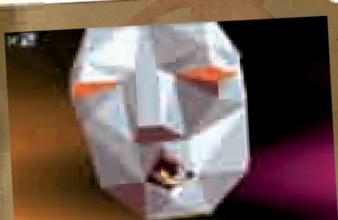
What has outraged a few of you on the forum is the rumour that the retro stock is being collected up and destroyed. Now, while we can't confirm or dispel this rumour – we invite Gamestation to set the record straight – we've seen a few of your opinions about the different experiences you've had when visiting your local store and asked what's going on.

You can still buy retro games from the Gamestation website at the moment, so why not get online and boost your collection while you still can.



If this is true, then there is perhaps one shred of good news for collectors: the scarcity of your collection will probably go up, and, ironically, crappy games like *Robocop Versus The Terminator* will become rare and valuable commodities. So don't ditch that copy of *Shaq-Fu* you bought in a large eBay haul just yet, you never know it could be fetching *Radiant Silvergun* prices in no time.

VILLAIN OF THE MONTH



ANDROSS

VILLAIN OF THE MONTH

Without bad villains there would be no good heroes. What would Batman be without the Joker? What would Mario be without Bowser? Complete rubbish, that's what. This month: Andross

First appearance: *Star Fox*

Distinguishing features: He's a monkey cube

Weapon of choice: A giant polygonal face

Most Likely to: Suck you in and spit you out

Least likely to: Enjoy bananas

Unusual fact: *Star Fox* contains two Easter eggs to unlock

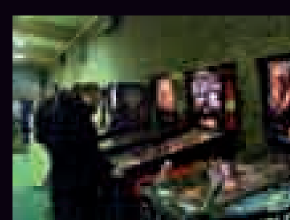
RETRO FUSION '08

IT'S BACK AND BETTER THAN EVER

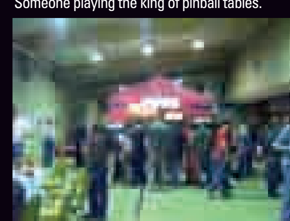
You can tell the summer's here – the nights are getting lighter, car journey's get stuffier and we can all look forward to a nice ole slice of Retro Fusion; a fantastic weekend of retro-gaming goodness in layman's terms.

If you missed the tenth RetroVision – which our very own fearless anchorman Paul Drury, covered last issue – don't panic, because on 19 and 20 July, Retro Fusion kicks off, offering another chance to wax lyrical about retro games, show off your *Guitar Hero* prowess and basically surround yourself with a bunch of brilliant people. The event will be held at Leamington Rugby Football Club, and attending the event will be Archer MacLean, and some of the guys from Console Passion who will be there to cater to your spending needs.

There will also be tons of retro cabs, consoles and pinball machines to thrash out to, and even a few 360s hooked up for some *COD 4* multiplayer melee action. If it's anything like the previous events, it looks set to be a great two days. If you want to know more about the event, or would like to order tickets, then take a trip over to www.retrofusiononline.com/event08. The first 50 people to buy a ticket will bag themselves a *Back In Time* DVD and a music set courtesy of Chris Abbott. Proceeds from this year's event will be going to the Everyman charity.



Someone playing the king of pinball tables.



The queue for Santa's grotto was getting bigger.

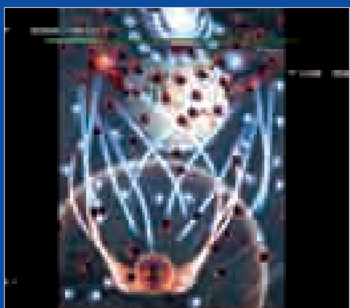
Retro Gamer DIARY

THINGS TO LOOK FORWARD TO...

EVENT HOSTING RETRO GAMER

IF YOU WANT **RETRO GAMER** TO PROMOTE UPCOMING GAMES AND EVENTS, CONTACT US AT RETROGAMER@IMAGINE-PUBLISHING.CO.UK

Just because **Retro Gamer** looks to the past doesn't mean there aren't plenty of games and events to look forward to. Every month we'll be listing exciting games and events for you to add to your 'to do' list



MAY

IKARUGA

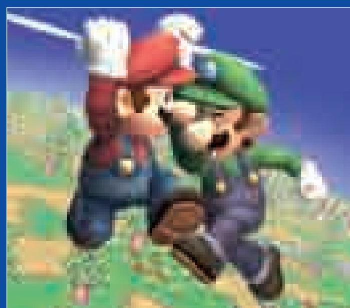
Released: May

Publisher: Treasure

Price: 800 points (£6)

Format: Xbox Live Arcade

While Xbox Live Arcade is continuing to gain momentum on the classic games front, its tendency to leave announcements until the last minute is starting to annoy us a little. Hopefully Treasure's superb blaster will actually appear this month, but if it doesn't at least you have our glowing review on page 92 to keep you going. Let's hope that other Dreamcast releases follow.



MAY

SUPER SMASH BROS BRAWL

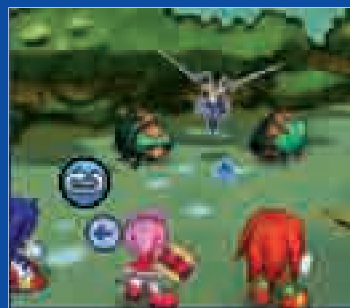
Released: 30 May

Publisher: Nintendo

Price: £34.99

Format: Wii

It's taking a fair amount of time, but we've finally been able to secure a copy of *Smash Bros* and it's absolutely brilliant. We would have reviewed it this very issue, but there's literally so much to uncover on it that we've decided to spend a little more time on it. Sonic has quickly become the brawler of choice, but Snake gets a lot of play as well.



JUNE

SONIC CHRONICLES

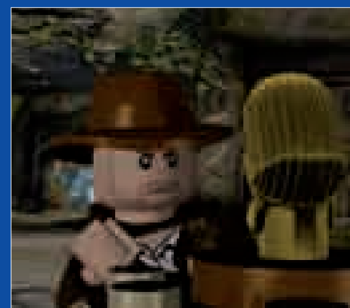
Released: June

Publisher: Sega

Price: TBC

Format: DS

The teaming up of Sega and BioWare to bring a new *Sonic* RPG to the DS has all the elements to be something very special. Although we don't have a lot of info at the moment, there are a few screenshots floating around the internet. It looks like battles will be turn-based *Final Fantasy* affairs and the visual look will be a beautiful mix of Hayao Miyazaki-style artistry and *Sonic Rivals*-style pixels.



JUNE

LEGO INDIANA JONES

Released: June

Publisher: LucasArts

Price: £49.99

Format: Xbox 360, PS3, DS, Wii, PS2

Traveller's Tales is at it again, raiding LucasArts' back catalogue and a box of Danish building blocks to rebuild the three original *Indy* tales in Lego. And we can't wait. *Lego Star Wars* was a lot of fun and there's no reason that the developer can't produce the same magic again. We're a little bit concerned about the direction it'll be going for '*Lego Labyrinth*', '*Lego Willow*' though?



JUNE

NEW INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD

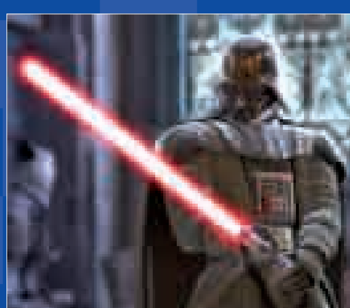
Released: June

Publisher: Konami

Price: £29.99

Format: DS

It's back in the diary, yes, and it would appear that *New International Track & Field* is going all *Super Smash Bros* on us, adding more characters and pushing back its release date until highly volatile tempers explode. To be honest, we're not too bothered that we have to wait a little longer to get our hands on the game, as we're sure Sumo Digital will knock this one out the park fittingly.



JULY

SOUL CALIBUR IV

Released: July

Publisher: Namco

Price: £49.99

Format: Xbox 360, PS3

Namco's popular swashbuckling franchise is soon to be making its way to next-gen consoles. The early word, so far, has been pretty positive and is something to the tune of new characters, including the Jedi Master Yoda for the Xbox 360 and the Sith Lord Vader for the PS3, plenty of play modes and an online battle feature – which is only making us all the more eager for this game's summer release. We'll play the DC version while we wait.



JULY

RETRO FUSION '08

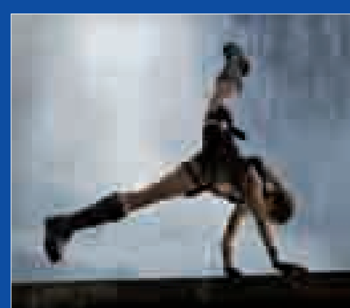
Dates: 19-20 July

Location: Leamington Rugby Club, Warwickshire

Admission: £12

Website: www.retrofusiononline.com/event08

We've always enjoyed our trips to Chris Wilkins' retro events, and after a brief break we're expecting his latest to be better than ever. Taking place at a brand new location, and once again supporting Everyman, Retro Fusion '08 is already on our to do lists and if you're a fan of retro gaming and drinking we suggest you sign up for tickets pretty sharpish.



OCTOBER

TOMB RAIDER: UNDERWORLD

Released: October

Publisher: Eidos

Price: £49.99

Format: Xbox 360, PS3

You can't really blame Eidos for releasing a third title in as many years. Following on directly from *Legend*, Lara once again finds herself up to her pretty neck in bad guys and ancient artefacts. Expect puzzles, a better aiming system, and a clever new engine that keeps track of incidental things like tracks in mud and dead bodies so you can find your way around more easily.

THE RETRO FORUM

HAVE YOUR SAY… SEND US A LETTER OR MAKE YOURSELF HEARD ON THE ONLINE FORUM – WWW.RETROGAMER.NET



CONTACT US

Snail Mail
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STAR LETTER

CARDBORED

Dear Retro Gamer,
During another boring spell in work, a pal and I decided to brush up the warehouse in the builder's merchants where we work. As we were brushing, I looked down and noticed what I'd done! No lie, I shouted, "Look at this Jim, I'm gonna send this to **Retro Gamer**."

He came over and said, "Lucky, you got an extra man!" We're both getting on by the way. I'm 40, and he's older. Now that's retro!

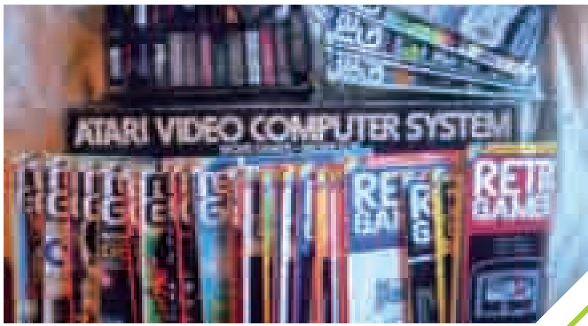
Oh yeah, and here's why I need a binder… and the Atari still works.

Mark, Wales


Any idea what this is? Answers on a random-looking photograph please.

Hey Mark,
Thanks for your letter. It took us a while to work out why it was you sent us a photo of a piece of cardboard, but eventually, after several hours of passing the picture around the office, someone at **Games™** *finally solved the mystery for us.*

We still can't determine whether it's a cardboard bust of Pac-Man with stone nipples or a cardboard x-ray of the pill-popper with two power pills lodged in his chest? Anyway, for providing us with so much entertainment we're going to award you with a binder to keep all those brilliant issues of **Retro Gamer** *safe.*



COMING TO MY SENSES

Dear Retro Gamer,
I thought it was about time to let you guys know how much I enjoy your magazine. I have been picking up odd issues for a while, but now I stake out my local newsagent and hungrily snap up each issue of **RG** on the day of release.

As soon as I turned to your recent run-'n'-gun feature (in **Retro Gamer** 44), *Sin & Punishment* came to mind. I was thinking that perhaps it would make it in at number twentysomething? So I was pleasantly surprised to see it at number one – the place where it truly belongs.

Recently I've considered not buying **Retro Gamer**. The quality is high but my funds are low. However, I soon came to my senses and realised that I just needed to give up something else, so I've stopped renting movies to keep well stocked with **RG**.

I'm always amazed at the quality of the in-depth articles. While the graphical design is nice, it's really pleasing that you give so much space for text. Magazines about recently released games often take a couple of hours to read, but **Retro Gamer** keeps me going for a few weeks.

The abundance of freeware and homebrew indie games that I've been turned on to is just staggering, those back pages are often the first ones that I read (the articles obviously, not the mobile nasty ads), along with the letters and the editorial. Then I march onwards to the articles that are longer than *Ben Hur*.

Before I conclude my ramblings, is there any chance of an Arcadia 2001 feature in the future? It was my first console as a kid before owning various Sega consoles. It took me years to remember that I ever had the thing, that was until I saw the Arcadia 2001 picture in your magazine.

Australian Ninja, Victoria, Australia

Thanks for your letter. We're pleased to hear that you've come to your senses and will continue to buy the mag. We try to pack as much into **Retro Gamer** *as possible, and it's pleasing to our ears (or should that be eyes) when we read that people recognise that fact. I wouldn't bother with movies mate.*



EVERY MONTH, ONE lucky reader will receive an extremely trendy **Retro Gamer** T-shirt (thankfully, not one worn by Darran) and a snazzy new **Retro Gamer** binder. All you have to do is present a lucid, thought-provoking piece of literature that melts our souls. Failing that, something funny with swear words in it will go down just as well…





» The Australian Ninja loved our run-'n'-gun feature. Similarly, we loved Holly Valance from *Neighbours*.

With regards to the independent/ homebrew section of the magazine, you'll probably be pleased to hear that we will soon be expanding that section as it has proved to be popular with many of our readers. Anyway, thanks for reading, and be a pal and help spread the good words of **Retro Gamer** *to your Aussie pals for us.*



» Mal wants us to print instructions in the mag. If we did that for games like *Elite* we'd probably need to double the cover price.

PRESS PLAY THEN ANY KEY

Dear Retro Gamer,

I have been interested in retro games for some time, but since buying a copy of your magazine six months ago, I've gone mad and now own over 20 consoles – which I hope to put on display, similar to the father-and-son handheld collectors in your recent article.

Just a suggestion – I buy many games that don't have instructions. When you write an article for on an old game I'd appreciate it if you were to give details on how to play the game, even just as far as how the controls work. A strategy guide or similar would be appreciated also.

Keep up the good work

MAL

We're really pleased that picking up our magazine has encouraged you to start collecting retro consoles. The new collector's corner feature is very popular and does seem to be getting a lot of love among **Retro Gamer** *readers. With regards to printing instructions for games, it's a really nice idea, and we'd love to be able to do it, but the problem we have is space, time and the same problem that you have – it would be very time-consuming for us to sit and work out all of the controls of a videogame. Your best bet is probably to head over to Gamefaqs.com and take a gander at what they've got to offer. It's generally a good resource for walkthroughs, hints and the like, so you might find what you're after.*

From the forum

EVERY MONTH, **RETRO GAMER** ASKS A QUESTION ON THE FORUM AND PRINTS THE BEST REPLIES. THIS MONTH WE WANTED TO KNOW...

WHAT INGREDIENTS WOULD YOU PUT IN A RETRO GAMER BIRTHDAY CAKE?

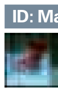


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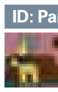
I've been thinking for 20 minutes for some pun-related retro/game cake doo-dah but I got nothing, damn my feeble brain.

ID: Master



Tash of Mario, Tail of Sonic, Pills of Pac-Man and Willy of Smith. And booze.

ID: Pantal00ns



Maria Whitaker's fun bags, topped off with 50 Game Over nipples.

ID: Beakerzoid



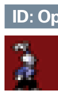
Let's not forget a healthy dollop of Wet Set Jelly. Could have been worse, I could have asked for some Py-JAM-arama in between the layers.

ID: Uglifruit



Minted Llama, cooked by Jamie Oliver Twins.

ID: Opa-Opa



I'd put a topless woman in there just like in the movie *Under Siege*.

ID: English Rob

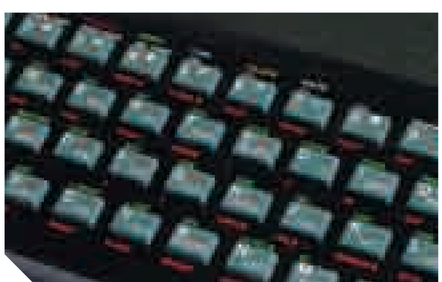


I'd put in the model who modelled the T-shirts in *The One* magazine.

ID: JetSetWilly



A Sinclair Spectrum with tapes of *Sabre Wulf*, *Jetman* and *Barbarian*, all topped off with hundreds and thousands and 'Whizzo! Explosive Chocolate Icing' (For when your parties need to go with a really good bang!)



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THE RETRO FORUM

AKE YOURSELF HEARD ON THE ONLINE FORUM – WWW.RETROGAMER.NET

GAMES THAT CHANGED OUR LIVES

NO. 04



CHARLES CECIL (boss of Revolution Software, makers of Broken Sword)

King's Quest (PC)

While I loved many Sierra adventures throughout the Eighties, the string of *King's Quest* games were becoming more and more stale and I became convinced I could do better – and so set up Revolution. However, the excellent *Monkey Island* appeared on the scene just as we were pitching our first title, *Lure Of The Temptress*, and it provided proof that the adventure game genre still offered plenty of scope for innovation.



» Martin wants a Game & Watch feature; we really want a purple Ferrari.

GAME AND WATCH… THIS SPACE

Dear Retro Gamer,

Having enjoyed your recent series on pinball table conversions of arcade hits, I wonder if you would be interested in covering another variety of retro games: the electronic game.

I realise that the old handhelds of the Eighties offered little depth compared with their computer, console and arcade equivalents, and yes, they were chunky and sometimes unresponsive, but, for many gamers, their retro-gaming memories are as deeply entrenched in those bleeping, flashing LED and LCD handheld boxes of wonder.

Perhaps a one-off feature or an ongoing/occasional look at a developer or genre of game would be good.

Keep up the great work

Martin Gillespie, Bournemouth

Hello Martin,

We're glad you enjoyed our pinball feature. We think it's important to mix up the magazine with a few different features now and then. Last issue, for instance, we ran a feature on the making of The Wizard, *and this issue we've dissected a 50 games that changed our lives feature and scattered it throughout this issue. We did run a collector's corner in issue 49, and are considering running a one-off feature on them. We'll see what we can do.*

LET'S GO APE AT SEGA

Dear Retro Gamer,

Hey guys, I just want to say I really enjoy the magazine and I'm seriously thinking of subscribing soon – so please keep up the good work.

I do have a question for you though. I recently read in your News Section that Sega have released a new gun game called *Let's Go Jungle!: Lost On The Island Of Spice*. I've never seen the machine, apart from a few screenshots on the internet, and it clearly sounds like you guys have had the opportunity to play it. So I was wondering whether you would be able to help shed some light on the game for me, as it sounds really interesting.

Ashley, email



Thanks for your email, Ashley. Yes, we have been lucky enough to play the machine, we're lucky enough to have one here on Bournemouth Pier (well we did a little while ago – not sure if it's still there). Anyway, the game is basically a weird mix of a gun game and a love tester, so it's best enjoyed with two people and someone you're truly enamoured with – playing it with your best mate just feels wrong. Perched inside a jeep you travel to a plush tropical island, tasked with the job of dispatching hordes of giant spiders, plants and bugs – apparently the biological result of some potent magic mushrooms that are native to the island.

Basically, at the end of each round, you're scored on how many times you come to the aid of your partner. So, for example, save them from the eminent pincers of a giant spider, or shoot a swarm of enemies appearing on their side of the screen and the game tallies up these instances and translates that into affection and love. It's certainly novel, and it helps that it's a bloody good blast, too. So, c'mon Sega, how about releasing it on the Wii, eh?

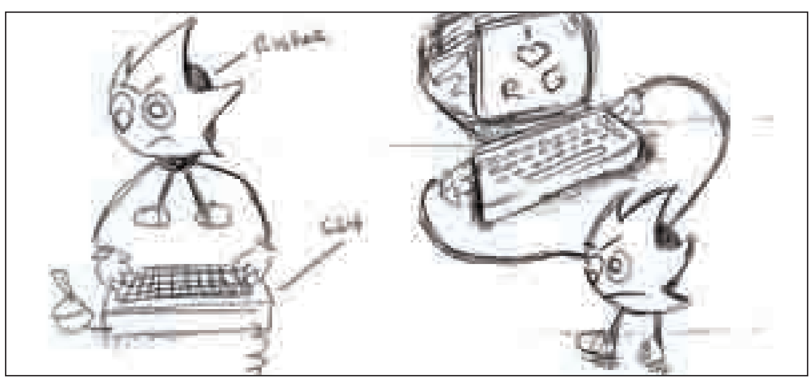
BRING BACK READER'S GALLERY

Dear Retro Gamer,

I'm a massive fan of 16-bit old-school gaming magazines like *Computer & Video Games*, *Super Play* and *Total*. One of the things that I really liked about those old mags – as well as the writing – was the fact that they had a reader's gallery section. Sadly, it's not something we see in magazines nowadays, and I think it would be really great if you could try to bring them back somehow. It would really give me yet another fantastic retro trip when I pick up the magazine.

Yours Stefan, Germany

We really like the thinking, Stefan, and can see the idea – we're a bit worried that the feature won't hold interest every month though, and Darran and Stuart will be forced to draw the pictures themselves (which would be a truly terrifying prospect, and would surely see our sales plummet). However, we are open to testing the water, so this month, we'll put up a poll on the forum. If the majority think that a reader's gallery is a good idea, we might look to dedicate a section of the letters page to reader's scribbles. If not, then back to the magazine vault of dropped ideas it'll go. We can't say any fairer then that now, can we?



» Not sure if the reader's gallery making a comeback will be a good thing? Have a look at this picture of Ristar playing a C64 then.

COLLECTOR'S CORNER

THIS MONTH'S COLLECTION COMES COURTESY OF BENJAMIN ROBINSON. AN AVID RETRO GAMES AND ARCADE COLLECTOR, HE ADMITS THAT IF YOU'RE SHREWD, HAVE A BIG HOME AND A TOLERANT SPOUSE, RETRO GAMING MAGS ARE A GREAT ACCOMPANIMENT TO ANY RETRO GAME COLLECTION



» The first magazine I ever bought was *Computer & Video Games*. I particularly liked *C&VG* as it covered all formats and gave me a glimpse into the world of arcades. I know a great deal of magazines can now be found in scanned format or online, but I find nothing beats holding a magazine in your hands and sitting down to read through it.









» *Super Play* is one magazine that still seems to have a great following. The covers look great, and feature Japanese anime. I think I paid £12 for one issue. Of course, as is the way, I only had five issues left to complete the collection before I noticed a complete one turn up on eBay, which I bagged for £30. I've been quite fanatical with my *Super Plays*, replacing any issues with pen marks or cutouts until I had a near mint collection (which I now have).

GAMES THAT CHANGED LIVES

JON RITMAN (programmer and creator of *Match Day II*)

International Soccer (Commodore 64)



NO. 05

For me, the most important game was one I hadn't played before, as strange as that seems. The game was *International Soccer* (*IS*) on the C64. The reason it was so important is that while at a show I asked several distributors what sort of games they felt the market was looking for and the answer was unanimous, they wanted *International Soccer* for the Spectrum. So I started programming what was to become *Match Day*. I decided not to play *IS* because I wanted my game to be unique. The day finally arrived when I handed over the master of *Match Day* to Ocean and later that evening I played my first game of *IS*. I was very relieved to find that while it was very good, it was completely different from *Match Day*. Many years later, a friend, Sandy White (the *Ant Attack* creator), called at my house with a stranger, it was Andrew Spencer and needless to say I offered him my gushing thanks for unknowingly setting up the most successful stage of my career.







» *Maximum* was a great magazine, although it was short-lived. I only found out about it after reading an article in **Retro Gamer**. This prompted me to start cataloguing my magazines and I was pleased to find that I had scooped all seven issues in my garage-raid and they couldn't have been in better condition.



» *Mean Machines* is another of my favourite magazines – down to my love for *Computer & Video Games*. I was over the moon when I completed collecting these, but gutted when, while writing this article, I accidentally sold issue one along with my spares.



» *Game Zone* has some fantastic covers. To be honest I haven't read through these yet. I find the hardest part of selling any of the magazines is nostalgia. I recently sold a complete collection of *Mega Tech* magazines to help fund my arcade purchases, but having a quick scan through them before I boxed them up, all of the artwork and info gave me a twinge of sorrow that they were going.



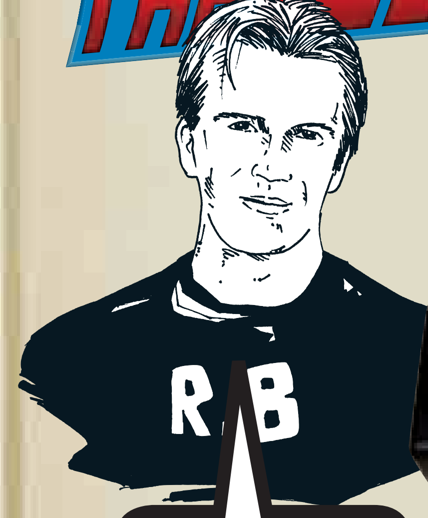


» Most of my Eighties and early Nineties issues came from a collection that I purchased on eBay. It was listed as a collection of about 500 mags, but there must have been about 3,000. I won the lot for just £10.50! The haul included *Mean Machines*, *Your Sinclair*, *C&VG*, *ACE*, *Zero*, *Sinclair User* and what must have been complete runs of virtually every Sega publication there had ever been.

If you have a collection that you feel the rest of the **Retro Gamer** readership needs to know about then contact us at retrogamer@imagine-publishing.co.uk and we'll do our best to get you in the magazine.

BACK TO THE EIGHTIES

THE LATEST NEWS FROM JUNE 1984



June 1984 – Quicksilva sold, Imagine Software almost bust, Vectrex gone, Sabre Wulf unleashed, Knight Lore unreleased, Wally Week debuts and Mr Smith goes for a stuffed crust with mushrooms… Richard Burton takes a slice and starts to evolve…



Quicksilva, one of the oldest and more successful software houses, was bought out by Argus Press Software in a multimillion pound deal. This also included both of Quicksilva's subsidiary labels, Software Studios and Quicksilva, Inc, the latter being the American division of the company.

Meanwhile, in the US, Atari began the restructuring of the company following a hard time in the American computing and gaming markets. It commenced with the sacking of 700 members of staff with the remaining 1,300 staff expected to be halved by the end of July.

Imagine Software was still going strong in the public eye, although beneath the veneer of the Megagames, it was just weeks away from liquidation. It struck a deal to sell the bulk of its back catalogue to new label, Beau Jolly, with a view to releasing compilations of its games. Imagine would retain a small percentage from each individual game sold.

Meanwhile, Imagine was still eagerly promoting the Megagames of *Psyclapse* and *Bandersnatch*. Stories in the press stated that the games would be ready for July and that they would be retailing for around £30, including a new hardware add-on. The reality was that the games were nowhere near finished.



» Imagine Software spent more money on full-page adverts extolling the virtues of the Megagames while the company edged towards liquidation.

Bored of tape loading? Microdrive cartridges keep getting chewed up? Then you'd be interested in the new tape storage system being readied for release on the Spectrum. The Wafadrive, produced by BSR, an American company, would be distributed by Rotronics in the UK at £129.95.



» *Forty Niner* (ZX81): This high-resolution game from Software Farm had a review in *Big K* this month, and showed that there was still a pulse left in the old girl.

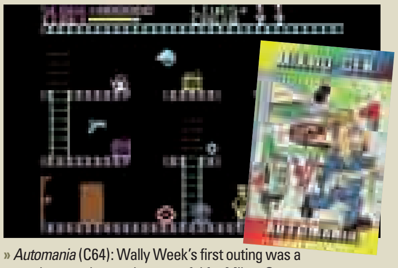
The Wafadrive used cartridges containing long continuous loops of tape, bigger in size than a Microdrive cart, but also running at a slower speed, presumably to lengthen the longevity and reliability of the media. In retrospect though, it failed on both counts, being prone to tape tangle.

The Vectrex vector graphics console stopped production in the USA after Milton Bradley decided it was not selling as well as forecast, resulting in existing stocks being sold off cheaply. Although there was no official word from the company on the future of the Vectrex in the United Kingdom, the end wasn't very far away…

After a few barren months, Ultimate was back with its latest creation, the wildly colourful maze game, *Sabre Wulf*. In a departure from Ultimate's usual packaging, *Sabre Wulf* was the first of the Ultimate titles to be released in its now familiar big black cardboard box style, along with an ultra-glossy and cryptic instruction booklet.



» *Orange Squash* (C64): As squash goes this is more home brand than Robinsons. A strange, yet reasonably playable, game.



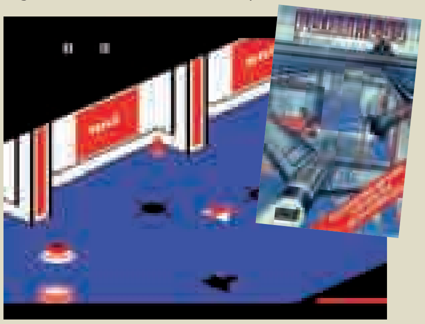
» *Automania* (C64): Wally Week's first outing was a good one and proved successful for Mikro-Gen. Just wait for *Pyjamarama* though…

This was reflected in the price, which had taken a hike from its usual £5.50 price tag to the lofty heights of £9.95. Would the game be worth the extra expense? Absolutely.

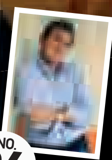
At that time *Sabre Wulf* was considered to be a terrific game. Little did we know that Ultimate's first Filmation title, *Knight Lore*, was already completed and tucked away awaiting a release at a later date. The Stampers held the game back as it essentially trumped *Sabre Wulf* and would've affected the potential sales of the game. Even the second Filmation game, *Alien 8*, was half finished before *Sabre Wulf* was released… You've got to tip your cap to those Stamper brothers.

Needless to say, it was actually a very sound business decision, with *Sabre Wulf* selling supremely well and *Knight Lore* later raising the gaming expectations of Spectrum users to an all-time high.

CRL was delving into licensing territory with a game based on the Jeff Wayne album, the



» *Fortress* (BBC): A very testing *Zaxxon* clone that normally saw you die within 30 seconds of starting the game.



GARY BRACEY

(former development director at Ocean Software)

Manic Miner (Spectrum)

Manic Miner was the first 'real' game that hooked me and made me realise the immersive entertainment that games could become. It gave me an appreciation for thoughtful design – progressive and compelling, enabling the player to get a bit further each play. The simple, but quirky, graphics made you care about the central character. I believe it was this game that inspired me to be part of that new entertainment form.

THIS MON…

1984

JUNE NEWS

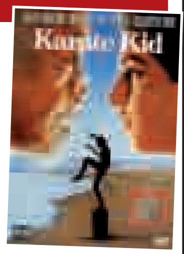
20 June saw a shake-up in the educational system with news that O-Level and CSE examinations were to be replaced with GCSEs. The General Certificate for Secondary Education would begin being taught in 1986 with the first exams taking place in 1988.

The main difference between O-Levels and GCSEs was that the old format measured pupil performance against others taking the exam, whereas GCSE grades are assigned according to a predetermined scoring scale.

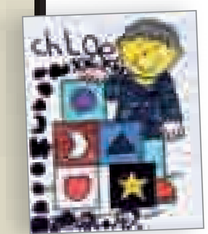
However, concerns remain about the ease that candidates can attain multiple A grades in GCSEs. It is wholly untrue that you could get an A grade in mathematics by holding a calculator upside down and spelling out the word 'BOOBIES' in numbers. That would, in fact, have got you a C+.

June turned out to be a good month for movie premieres, with three films released that would warm the hearts of retro fans everywhere. 8 June saw *Ghostbusters* and *Gremlins* receive their worldwide premieres in the US and 22 June saw *The Karate Kid* hit the big screen.

All three were eventually converted into games. *Ghostbusters* on virtually every format ever made, *Gremlins* as a graphics adventure on several 8-bit systems and *The Karate Kid* on the NES in the US.



» Ralph Macchio mantis kicks his way to victory in *The Karate Kid*. Should've put a move or two like that in *Crossroads*…



» The GCSE art examination proved to be a lot easier than everyone first thought. Top marks for colouring in.



» *Sabre Wulf* (Spectrum): Great game, great packaging and great graphics but already superseded by the unreleased *Knight Lore*.

musical adaptation of *The War Of The Worlds*. It would be out for the Spectrum at £7.95.

Beyond Software announced three new releases this month. *Spellbound*, *Psytron* and *Lords Of Midnight* would all be available for the Spectrum with Commodore 64 and Amstrad versions following later.

A new game from Mikro-Gen was getting plenty of advertising space in the gaming



» *Lords Of Midnight* (Spectrum): Mike Singleton's epic of an adventure game contained 86-trillion different locations… ish.

magazines this month. *Automania*, which was due for release within a couple of months, featured a new character, Wally Week, who it was hoped would become Mikro-Gen's gaming figurehead and feature in future releases. Of course, Wally indeed became hugely successful including the magnificent *Pyjamarama* among the company's future *Wally* games.

Computer & Video Games magazine was surfing the current wave of *Jet Set Willy*-ness by featuring a type-in program by Matthew Smith. *André's Night Off* was, the story goes, an idea that didn't quite make it into the final version of *Jet Set Willy*. What it actually turned out to be was a repetitive one-screen game in which you had to dodge the amazing technicolour man-eating pizzas (pure Smith) for an ever-increasing amount of time per screen. It wasn't great, but it certainly did its job of keeping *Jet Set Willy* in the limelight and, no doubt, helped to shift a shed load of *C&VG*'s that month, too.

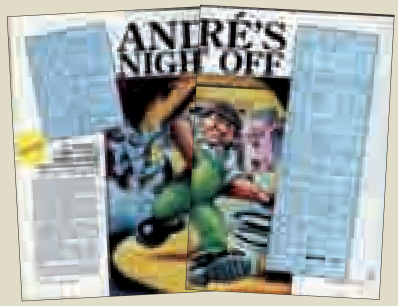
C&VG had no less than three Games of the Month for June, with the trio of excellence being *Fortress* (Pace Software, BBC), *Psytron* (Digital Integration, Spectrum) and *Orange Squash* (Merlin Software, C64). Some of the also-rans included *BC Bill* (Imagine, C64), *Hard Hat Mack* (Electronic Arts, C64), *Eskimo Eddie* (Ocean, Spectrum) and *Killer Gorilla* (Program Power, Acorn Electron).

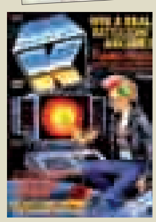
Big K's reviewing team covered a variety of systems in its reviews section, including *Pi-Balled* (Automata, Spectrum), *Kamikaze* (A&F, Acorn Electron), *Eight Ball* (Microdeal, Dragon 32), *Frogger* (Parker Brothers, ColecoVision), *3D Death Chase* (Micromega, Spectrum), *Forty Niner* (Software Farm, ZX81) and *Suicide Mission* (Starpath Corporation, Atari 2600).



COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES

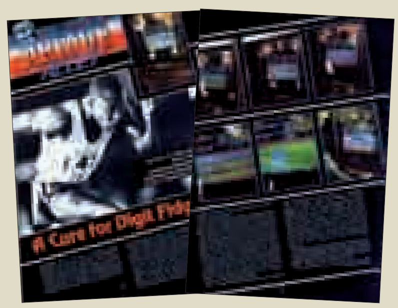
C&VG had a *Jet Set Willy*-inspired cover in lieu of the Matthew Smith type-in, *André's Night Off*, that featured in the magazine. The cover, featuring toothy toilets and a bouncing cheque, was painted by master games cover artist Bob Wakelin. The type-in itself was best left alone…





BIG K

Among the seething mass of game reviews, *Big K* also managed to crowbar in a review of Konami's newest arcade offering, *Track And Field*. A blend of six events, including hurdles and javelin, all of which were designed to create instant lactic acid and initiate shoulder cramps within seconds of play.





YOUR SPECTRUM

With *Jet Set Willy* the talk of the town, *Your Spectrum* did what it does best – dissecting the game to smithereens by reviewing it from inside the code rather than the bug-ridden mansion. You would have to wait a couple of issues before the Hacking Away section really ripped the game apart.

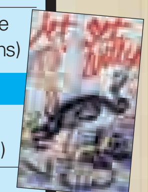


JUNE 1984



MUSIC

1 Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go (Wham!)
2 Two Tribes (Frankie Goes To Hollywood)
3 Smalltown Boy (Bronski Beat)
4 High Energy (Evelyn Thomas)
5 Let's Hear It For The Boy (Denise Williams)



SPECTRUM

1 Jet Set Willy (Software Projects)
2 Fighter Pilot (Digital Integration)
3 Manic Miner (Software Projects)
4 Atic Atac (Ultimate)
5 Hunchback (Ocean)



COMMODORE 64

1 Hunchback (Ocean)
2 Space Pilot (Anirog)
3 Manic Miner (Software Projects)
4 Blagger (Alligata)
5 The Hobbit (Melbourne House)

BBC

1 Chuckie Egg (A&F Software)
2 Blagger (Alligata)
3 Fortress (Pace Software)
4 Twin Kingdom Valley (Bug-Byte)
5 Legion (Software Projects)



BACK TO THE NINETIES



THE LATEST NEWS FROM SEPTEMBER 1990

SEPTEMBER 1990 – Nintendo relaxes its rules, the SAM Coupé is back, the Plus 3 dies, Sega's Mega Drive is almost here, the Game Boy already is and The Games Machine gets a facelift and a makeover. Richard Burton gets a scalpel and starts trimming…


» The new Mega Drive from Sega promised to change the face of gaming.

There was good news from Japan for third-party-software developers as Nintendo relaxed its archaic software rules. Until now, Nintendo had set restrictions in place that stopped anyone other than itself from producing software for the NES.

That all changed with Nintendo granting licensing agreements to approximately 50 software developers including big names such as Konami, Jaleco and Namco. Previously, Nintendo would've had creative control over its development projects as well as shifting the cost of cartridge production onto the third party. Now, third parties could create their own games and manufacture their own cartridges although they would still have to pay Nintendo a fixed fee for the privilege.

So, good news for the NES software creators but what of the forthcoming Super Nintendo which is expected to hit the shops before the end of the year? Nintendo decided that it would, for the immediate future at least, hold onto all rights regarding cartridge production for the SNES.

The PC-Engine, due to be released in the UK at £99, was pulled by makers, NEC, in favour of concentrating its efforts on the American markets. Shame.

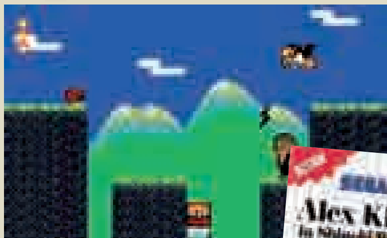
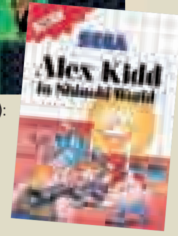

» *Super Monaco GP* (Master System): A conversion of the arcade classic. But, no Career mode unlike the Mega Drive version.

The USA could also look forward to a revamped Sega Master System. The console would be smaller in size and price, estimated to be as little as £35. The UK would have to make do with the original SMS until the new version was released around the end of 1991.

September also marked the arrival of the biggest computer show in the UK, the Computer Entertainment Show held at Earls Court, London. The usual array of software houses and computer companies were present, pushing their assorted wares onto unsuspecting visitors.

Among the purveyors of software were Domark who had clearly been busy, with several new games on demonstration including *Hydra*, *Skull And Crossbones*, *ThunderJaws*, *S.T.U.N. Runner* and *Hard Drivin' II*.

Also present was Ocean, deep of pocket and huge of stand, who also had a number of high-profile titles in development, most of which were licensed games. Such gaming gems as *RoboCop 2*, *Nightbreed*, *Navy Seals* and *Total Recall* were the licensed offerings, while ready-to-release puzzle-based games, *Puzznic* and *Plotting*, were also being promoted.

» *Alex Kidd In Shinobi World* (Master System): *Shinobi* meets *Alex Kidd In Miracle World*. Cute graphics and really playable.

Finally, it had *Pang* and *Toki* on preview but almost ready for release. Most 8 and 16-bit formats would be catered for with Ocean's tidal wave of gaming goodness.

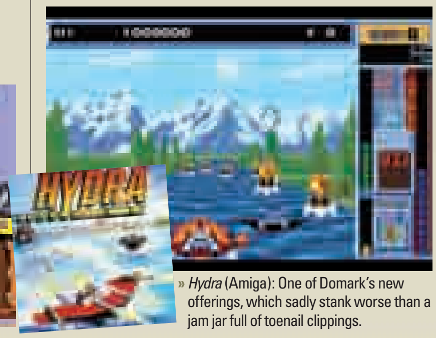
Activision had plumped for following the well-trodden path of sequels with a couple of its own planned for the near future. *R-Type II* and *Spindizzy II* were the games, although the latter was more of a 16-bit enhancement than a fully fledged follow-up. Both should see action on the ST and Amiga.

The SAM Coupé rose phoenix-like at the show with the news that the former owners of Miles Gordon Technology, which had recently gone into liquidation, had formed a new company called SAM Computers Ltd, and would be selling the SAM Coupé, with the new addition of a disc drive, for £199.

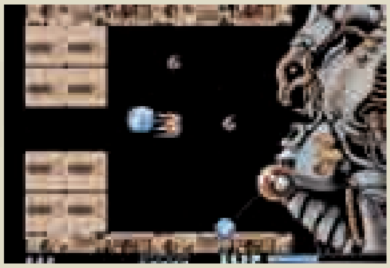
The owners, Alan Miles and Sam Gordon, were reportedly buying back machines from the receivers on a piecemeal basis so as not to risk financial problems once again.

Just as one machine rises from the dead, the computing balance is restored with another ceasing production. September saw Amstrad confirm it had stopped making the


» *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade* (Master System): It's *Fall Guy*, no, hang on, it's *Stop The Express*…



» *Hydra* (Amiga): One of Domark's new offerings, which sadly stank worse than a jam jar full of toenail clippings.


» *R-Type II* (Atari ST): A couple of new weapons otherwise exactly the same as the original. That's not a bad thing mind…

GAMES LIVES



NO. 07

KEITA TAKAHASHI

(visionary programmer and creator of Katamari Damacy)

All retro games

I am influenced by simple games. Most retro games are simple and this is what makes them fun. But when I made *Katamari Damacy* I wanted to produce something fresh, something that could not be done in the real world. I think many people would have felt like this when games first came out.

1990

SEPTEMBER NEWS

10 September saw the first episode aired in the US of the new comedy sitcom starring Will Smith as *The Fresh Prince Of Bel-Air*. It was an instant hit on both sides of the Atlantic although the UK had to wait another five months to get its first glimpse.

In the UK, a different style of comedy was making its debut on TV. 28 September saw the first episode of the satirical news quiz panel show, *Have I Got News For You*, broadcast on BBC Two.

Martin Scorsese's movie *Goodfellas*, premiered at the Venice Film Festival to critical acclaim, picking up several awards throughout the year. It was later nominated for six Oscars with only Joe Pesci winning his category for Actor in a Supporting Role.

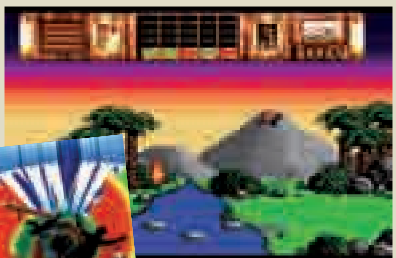
The Sydney Olympics were up and running and September proved a fruitful time for British athletes with some memorable moments. Highlights included Denise Lewis winning gold in the women's pentathlon, Steve Redgrave winning his fifth successive Olympic gold in the coxless fours rowing and Jason Queally triumphing in the 1km cycling time trial. Rumours he did it no-handed on a Raleigh Chopper were very false indeed…



» Paul Merton is the one with surreal humour. Paul Merson is the one who is rubbish at commentating on Sky Sports News.



» Steve Redgrave also won a gold medal in the slow pedalo race. He covered 1,000 metres in just under 85 days…



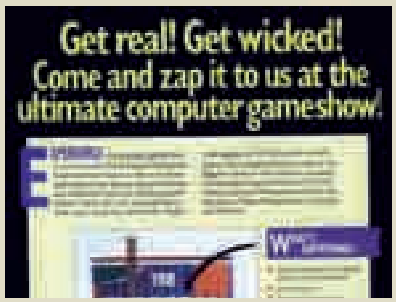
» *Time Machine* (Amiga): Nice graphics and a great premise, but whoever designed the control system needs a good kicking…

disc-based Spectrum Plus 3 to concentrate on the Plus 2 and CPC Plus machines.

US Gold was again dusting off its Master System dev kits with some exciting conversions on the way. *Paperboy* and *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade* were due for an October release, with *Heroes Of The Lance*, *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* and the golfing legend that is *Leaderboard*, all due to follow shortly afterwards.

It would also be keeping tabs on the long-awaited release of the Sega Mega Drive in the UK, which finally got an official release date – some time in September… perhaps. Nice one Sega, keep it vague and cover your bases…

The price for the console would be £189.99 and it would come with *Altered Beast*. There



» The European CES event; the place where unfinished games are previewed before being released two years later.

would also be a range of software available from the off, ranging from £29.99 to £39.99 and covering such arcade favourites as *Super Thunder Blade* and *Ghouls 'N Ghosts*.

Another gaming legend getting its official UK release this month was the Game Boy, in all its monochromatic glory. It was mooted as having a release price of £75 and coming with *Tetris*. Of course, both the Mega Drive and Game Boy have been kicking about the UK for a number of months thanks to Japanese games importers and the grey market in consoles.

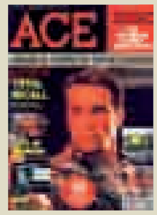
Issue 34 of *The Games Machine* was to be the last before its relaunch as the new look *Raze* magazine. In the meantime, *TGM* found time while clearing its desks, to award its last remaining TGM Star Players to *Paradroid 90* (Hewson/Graftgold, Amiga) and *Time Machine* (Activision, Amiga) with the adventuring equivalent, The Golden Scroll, going to *Fool's Errand* (Miles Computing, PC).

C&VG thrust its C&VG Hits on *Anarchy* (Psyclapse, ST), *Gold Of The Aztecs* (US Gold/Kinetica, ST), *Murder* (US Gold, Amiga), Plotting (Ocean, ST), *Simulcra* (Microstyle, ST), *Time Machine* (Activision, ST), *ESWAT* (Sega, Mega Drive), *Don Doko Don* (Taito, PC-Engine), *Super Monaco GP* (Sega, Master System) and *Alex Kidd In Shinobi World* (Sega, Master System), which were all deemed worthy.



» The last ever issue of *The Games Machine*. Following a magazine makeover, it would later reappear as *Raze*.

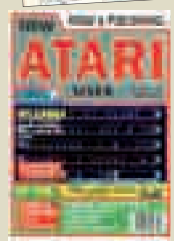
THIS MONTH IN...



ACE

On the cover was Arnie, as *ACE* had set aside space for a preview of Ocean's new *Total Recall* game. Inside, there was a general overview feature of the games consoles currently available, particularly handy with new machines being introduced seemingly on a monthly basis. *ACE*'s favourite was the new Sega Mega Drive.





NEW ATARI USER

It featured a review of the Atari Lynx and road-tested a few of its games. Being the world's first handheld with a colour LCD screen, you'd think that would be enough to see off the monochromatic, small-screened Game Boy. Think again.





THE GAMES MACHINE

TGM's last issue saluted the release of Nintendo's Game Boy which was due out this month. It received a glowing review from *TGM*'s deputy editor, Richard Eddy, paying particular attention to why it was better than Atari's Lynx, as well as squeezing in a few mini-reviews. Top scorer? *Super Mario Land*.

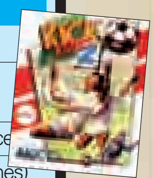


AUGUST 1990



AMIGA

1 Kick Off 2 (Anco)
2 Lost Patrol (Ocean)
3 Damocles (Novagen)
4 Rorke's Drift (Impressions)
5 World Cup 90 (Genias)



ATARI ST

1 Kick Off 2 (Anco)
2 Imperium (Electronic Arts)
3 F-29 Retaliator (Oce
4 Sim City (Infogrames)
5 Damocles (Novagen)

PC

1 Railroad Tycoon (Microprose)
2 Their Finest Hour (Lucasfilm)
3 PGA Tour Golf (Electronic Arts)
4 Secret Of The Silver Blades (SSI)
5 Ultima VI (Origin)



SEGA MEGA DRIVE

1 Ghostbusters (Activision)
2 Thunder Force III (Sega)
3 Whip Rush (Sega/Renovation)
4 Cyberball (Sega)
5 ESWAT: City Under Siege (Sega)

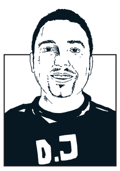


BATMAN

NAH-NAH, NAH-NAH,NAH-NAN, NAH-NAH, BATMAN!



- **PUBLISHER:** OCEAN
- **RELEASED:** 1986
- **GENRE:** ISOMETRIC ADVENTURE
- **FEATURED HARDWARE:** AMSTRAD CPC
- **EXPECT TO PAY:** £1



HISTORY

All praise Bob Kane and Bill Finger, for if it wasn't for these talented artistes we may never have experienced the excellence that was *Head Over Heels*.

In case you weren't aware, Kane and Finger co-created the classic DC Comics superhero Batman, who was then turned into a rather fetching gaming superhero in an isometric platformer by Jon Ritman and Bernie Drummond, which in turn formed the basis for *Head Over Heels*. Still, we've done that par-isometric classic to death, so let's instead focus our attention on Ritman's *Batman*.

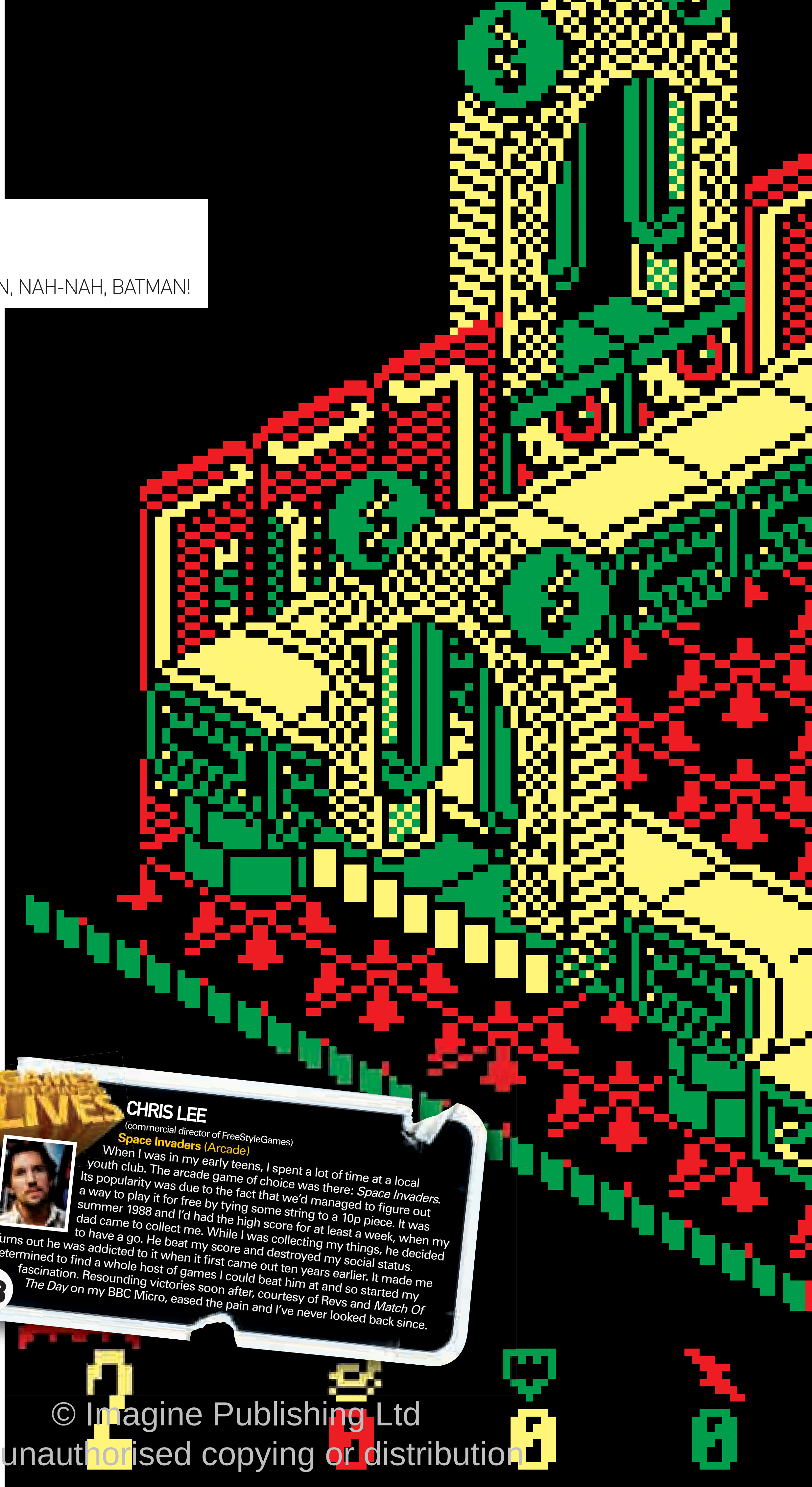
Ocean's first licensed *Batman* game not only marked Ritman's first isometric adventure, but would also be the first time (of many) that he would team up with friend-of-a-friend Bernie Drummond.

With no pressure from Ocean or DC Comics, Ritman allowed his mind to run rampant, and while there were no cameos from the likes of the Joker, Penguin or Riddler, there were plenty of bizarre-looking enemies to avoid and smart puzzles to solve.

Before Batman could concentrate on recovering the missing pieces of his Batmobile, his first task was to collect four handy items that would make his final task that little bit easier. The Bat Boots allowed the portly one to jump, the Bat Bag enabled him to pick up certain objects, while the Bat Thruster and Low Gravity Belt slowed your rate of speed while falling and allowed you to change direction.

Of course, once you had found the above items your quest was only really beginning, and certain parts of the Batmobile proved incredibly tricky to secure. Thanks to its finely tuned gameplay, sparkling visuals and cleverly designed puzzles, *Batman* never became a chore to play, and while it wasn't as large as *Head Over Heels*, it still took a fair amount of time and skill to complete.

We've included a shot of the Amstrad version here, mainly because it's the most colourful of the 8-bit outings, but whichever format you eventually plump for, you'll be in for a brilliant time.



GAMES THAT CHANGED LIVES

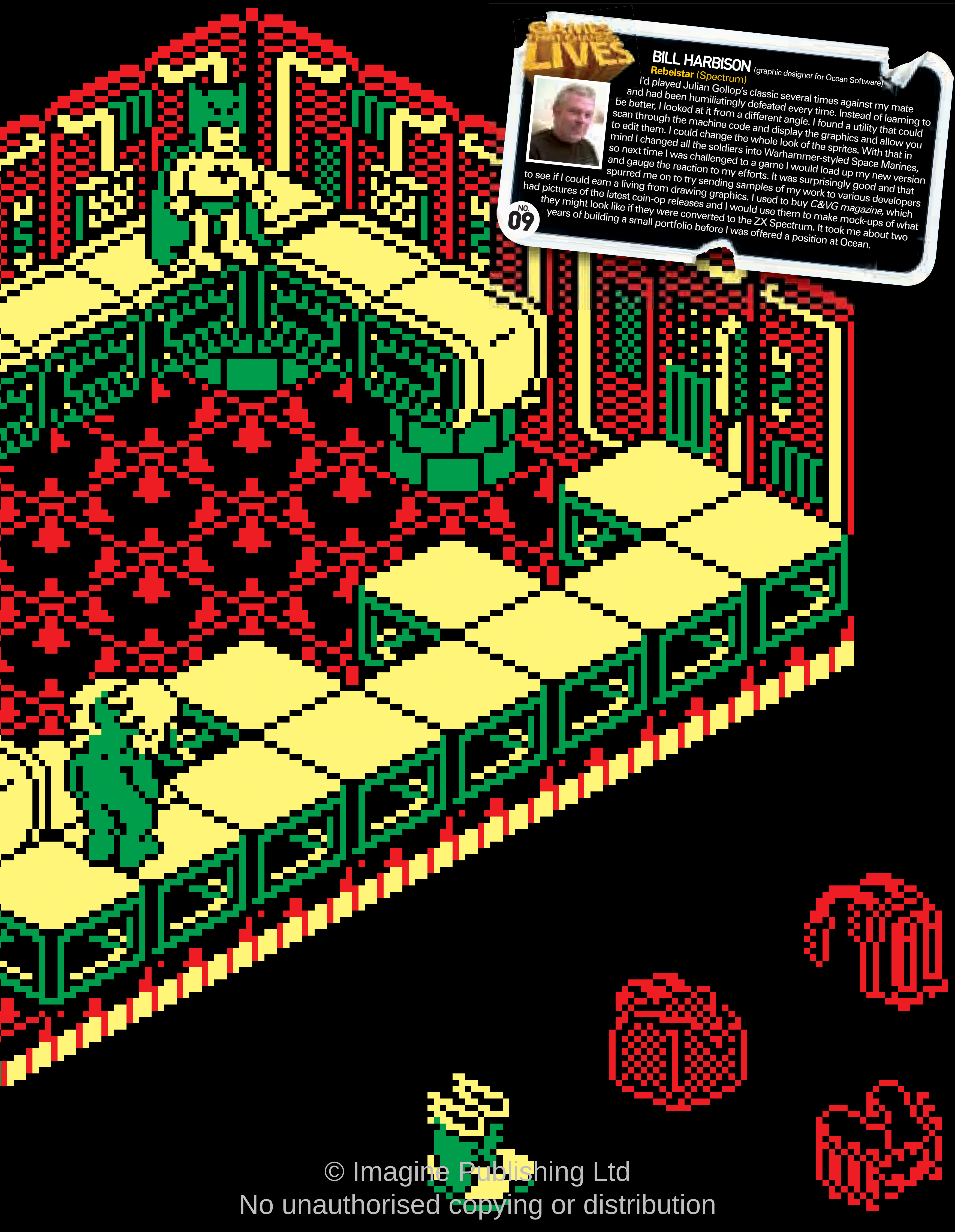
CHRIS LEE

(commercial director of FreeStyleGames)

Space Invaders (Arcade)

NO. 08

When I was in my early teens, I spent a lot of time at a local youth club. The arcade game of choice was there: *Space Invaders*. Its popularity was due to the fact that we'd managed to figure out a way to play it for free by tying some string to a 10p piece. It was summer 1988 and I'd had the high score for at least a week, when my dad came to collect me. While I was collecting my things, he decided to have a go. He beat my score and destroyed my social status. Turns out he was addicted to it when it first came out ten years earlier. It made me determined to find a whole host of games I could beat him at and so started my fascination. Resounding victories soon after, courtesy of Revs and *Match Of The Day* on my BBC Micro, eased the pain and I've never looked back since.



BILL HARBISON (graphic designer for Ocean Software)

Rebelstar (Spectrum)

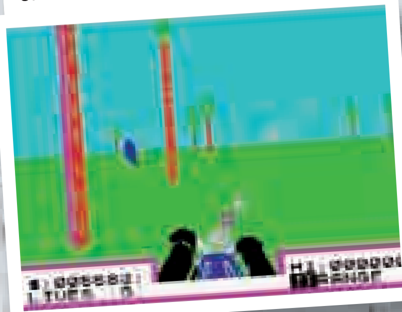
I'd played Julian Gollop's classic several times against my mate and had been humiliatingly defeated every time. Instead of learning to be better, I looked at it from a different angle. I found a utility that could scan through the machine code and display the graphics and allow you to edit them. I could change the whole look of the sprites. With that in mind I changed all the soldiers into Warhammer-styled Space Marines, so next time I was challenged to a game I would load up my new version and gauge the reaction to my efforts. It was surprisingly good and that spurred me on to try sending samples of my work to various developers to see if I could earn a living from drawing graphics. I used to buy *C&VG magazine*, which had pictures of the latest coin-op releases and I would use them to make mock-ups of what they might look like if they were converted to the ZX Spectrum. It took me about two years of building a small portfolio before I was offered a position at Ocean.

NO. 09

READERS' TOP GAMING MOMENTS

50 issues is a long time for any magazine, but it's a particularly lengthy haul for a title that's as niche as Retro Gamer. So, after reaching such a momentous landmark, we felt it was only fair that we devoted several pages to the people that have actually allowed us to get there. The next five pages are literally crammed to bursting with some of our readers' favourite moments. Some you may have experienced yourself, some you'll have yet to discover, but all of them have been important enough to get burnt onto the person's memory forever. Hopefully you'll enjoy reading them as much as we did

Forum ID: SirClive
Winning the *3D Deathchase* week in the retroleague was definitely up there. Being a crap gamer, it's great to find that one game that really clicks for you. But the other moment must be getting a great mention for our little Weekend Gamer project in October 2007's issue of **Retro Gamer**. Cheers Spanner.



Forum ID: GarryG
Finally finishing *Ultima IV* on my monochrome Amstrad 1512! The first RPG I ever completed.

Forum ID: romanista
Beating my brother at *SWOS*, over and over again.

Forum ID: Blumf
Linking up two sets of Amiga 500's for a head-to-head tournament with ten mates on *Stunt Car Racer*. I didn't win but that early networked play was awesome.



Forum ID: ady_lister
Basically completing games that I should have done 20 years ago.

Forum ID: mandelbrot78
Completing *SFII* with all eight characters in one sitting (one coin each). A big crowd had gathered where I was playing, cheering and giving advice. When I finished they literally lifted me up for the celebration. The arcade operator wasn't very happy though. He threw us all out.

RETRO GAMER READERS'

GAMES THAT CHANGED LIVES

NO. 10

JORDAN MECHNER (creator of Prince Of Persia)



Asteroids

The first game I created was a version of *Asteroids* because I loved that game. I called it *Deathbounds* and submitted it to Brøderbund, but it was rejected. Yet it was my first taste of creating a game and it spurred me on to produce *Karateka.*

Forum ID: pantal00ns
Finally getting broadband so that first-person shooters became games rather than a flipchart.



Forum ID: LeeT
Going round my mates house circa 1994 and seeing him using a Spectrum emulator on his PC – it got me back into gaming after a few years away.

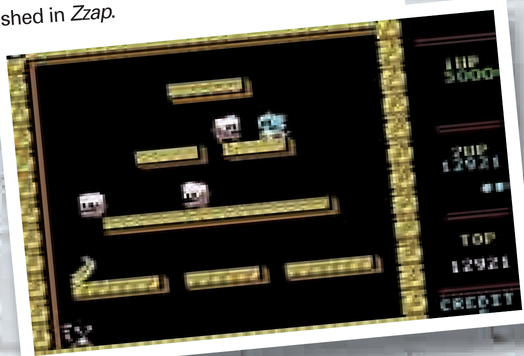
Forum ID: Shin_Gouki
Finally unwrapping *Street Fighter II* for the SNES on Christmas Day 1992. No need for the arcade any more! Incidentally, I still went to the arcade.



Forum ID: Igorthegreen
That question hits me right in the heart! Those long, sunny Wednesday afternoons, visiting my mate who owned a Commodore 64… We were 15-ish and played *Samantha Fox Strip Poker.* Took ages to load, but was it worth the wait? It was!



Forum ID: Bub&Bob
1) Completing *Bubble Bobble* for the first time on the C64. 2) Seeing *OutRun* in the arcade for the first time. 3) My letter about porn mags being published in *Zzap.*



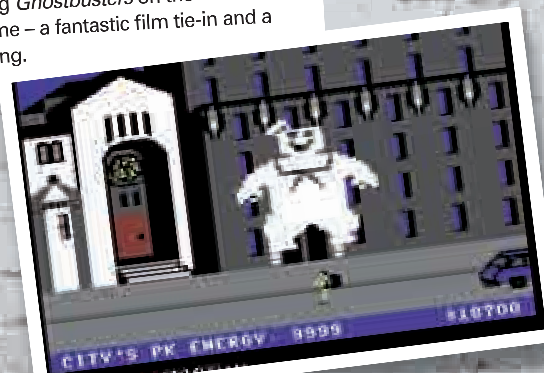
Forum ID: thl
Getting the Sega Master System back in summer 1989. One of my brothers got it as a present from the schoolteacher for gaining 100 per cent attendance.



Forum ID: Antiriad 2097
Waking up and discovering that now the Spectrum had dried out, it still worked despite the alarming 'POP!' last night. Computers and alcohol don't mix, kids.



Forum ID: merman
Completing *Ghostbusters* on the C64 for the first time – a fantastic film tie-in and a good ending.



Forum ID: TMR
Getting a job in an indie computer shop during the late-Eighties and, in particular, on the games side of things, and thus being able to borrow consoles, machines and software overnight!

Forum ID: NorthWay
Finding places with coin-ops, either in town, when on vacation, or even on those fairs that travelled aboard ferries (climbing the stairs ever upwards and finding them felt like you were doing something you shouldn't do – go back to the fair!). And when your regular arcade got a new game, of course.
Those were the days when you knew arcades were ages beyond what you could get at home…

READERS' TOP GAMING MOMENTS

Forum ID: yethboth
Finally having the money, after months of hard work and saving up, to afford a Sega Saturn, complete with *Sega Rally* and having some change left over for an issue of *Sega Saturn*. Sadly, I purchased the excellent system at the time when all gaming companies were abandoning it. But I didn't care, it was the best 32-bit console I had ever purchased and I still have it and play it just as much now as I did back then.



Forum ID: chinnyhill10
Beating Jammy Jim in *180*. You always met him in the final, and he would never miss. Your only advantage was that you always threw first. That or getting a *Your Sinclair* badge and a compliments slip signed by Jon Nash.



Forum ID: pforson
Summer holiday. Temperature in the upper nineties. Five sweaty boys in a dark room all huddled around my Amiga playing *Syndicate* until the early hours. Complete bliss.

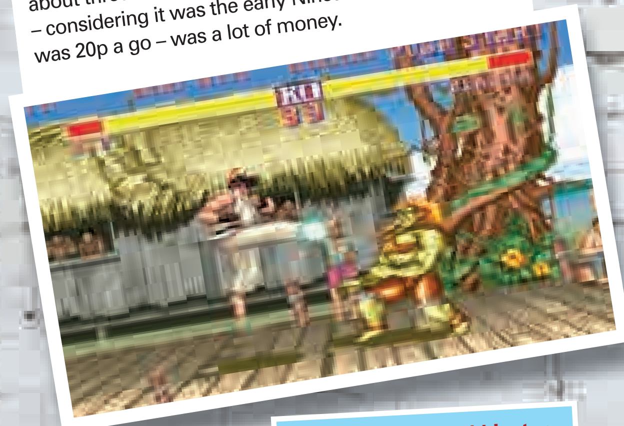
Forum ID: sirclive1
Winning our local *Pro Evolution Soccer* league. 12 of us have been playing it since the PSone version, I finally won the league for the first and only time on *Pro Evolution 6* on the Xbox 360. It took roughly 20 attempts and I only won it last game because one of the duffers in the group scraped a dodgy draw with a multi-winning previous champion.



Forum ID: paranoid marvin
Getting Letter Of The Month in **RG** of course!

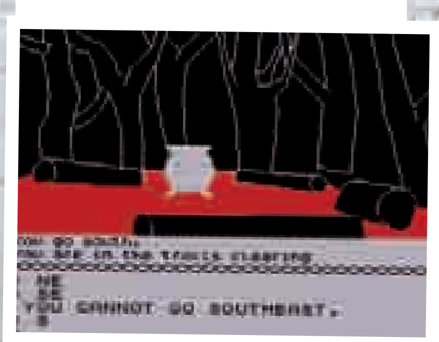
Forum ID: retrogarden
My best gaming moment had to be completing *Street Fighter II* in the arcades for the first time. What made it even sweeter was my local arcade was having a competition at the time to win a Super Nintendo with *Street Fighter II* on it. The highest score at the end of the day over the four machines won.

I came second, but it basically ended up as me and this kid the same age as me playing constantly for about three hours. I spent around £10 that day, which – considering it was the early Nineties, I was 12, and it was 20p a go – was a lot of money.

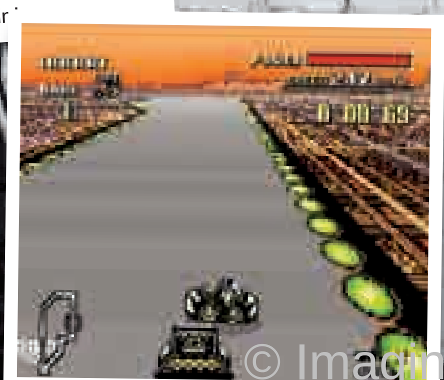


Forum ID: The Master
Programming my own version of *Vanguard*, after having seen it once whilst on summer holiday… then checking it 20 years later and seeing that it wasn't actually so bad! I forgot the cheesy *Star Trek* music, though… rainbow zone… edit: I SHOULD ADD I WAS SIX-EFFING-YEARS OLD AT THE TIME, LOL.

Forum ID: Captain Scarlet
Without doubt, my best gaming moment was completing *The Hobbit* on the ZX Spectrum. The frustrations of Thorin singing about gold, the hilarity of drinking wine in the cellar and those god-damn awful bulbous eyes were all forgotten the moment that I instructed Bard to 'SHOOT DRAGON WITH BOW'.



Forum ID: Mr L
Hmmmmm… so many, so many. I would say days out to the Trocadero back in the mid-Nineties to play eight-player *Virtua Racing* were pretty special. At home, *Super Mario World* on the SNES. Man, I played that game soooooo much, I remember buying *Super Soccer*, *Super Tennis* and *F-Zero* on launch, but they never got a look i



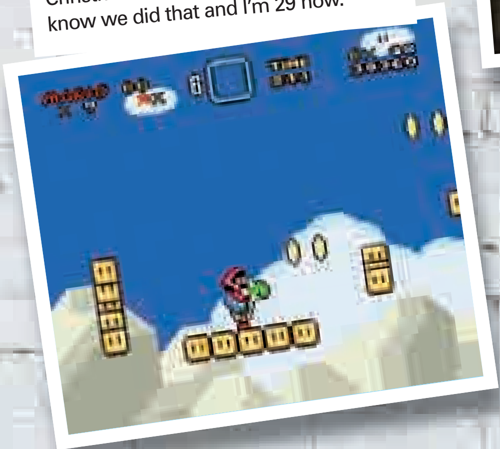
Forum ID: Shaun.Bebbington
The speech in *Beach Head II*.

Forum ID: igbandy
Finally completing arcade *R-Type* for the first time on one credit, after what felt like an awful long time learning every attack pattern. Completing arcade *Double Dragon*, first without using the dreaded elbow move and, second, without losing any energy.



Forum ID: 3fruits
I remember visiting Currys in Crewe just as the SNES was being released. They had a demo in there of *Super Mario World*, which I would take the bus journey from Sandbach to Crewe – which was a good 30 minutes – after school and at weekends to play. Eventually, I got my mum in there and showed her what I wanted for Christmas that year. Meantime I practically completed *Mario World* in the store. I used to have a crowd around me, mostly shop workers, watching me.

Then my mum got me *Street Fighter II* and a SNES for Christmas. Me and my cousin used to unwrap it and rewrap it before mum got home from work – of course we were bunking off school. We completed *Street Fighter II* prior to Christmas Day, and mum still doesn't know we did that and I'm 29 now.

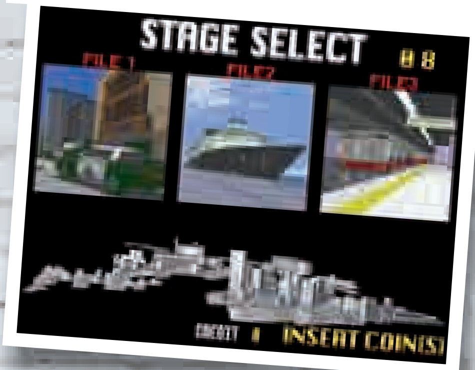


Forum ID: Hank Splendid
Playing *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*. I was riding shotgun in a helicopter shooting gang members coming out of a house with a machine gun. The sun started to set – turning a beautiful shade of orange and at the very same time Toto's *Africa* started playing on the radio… glorious!

Either that or bunking off school as a kid solely so that I could play the recently released *Uridium* on my C64! Sorry mum!

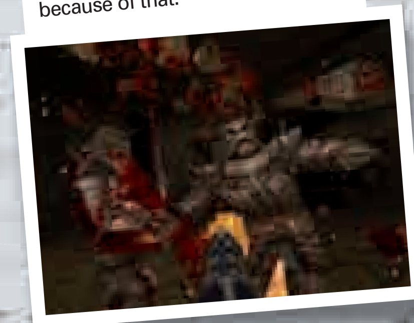


Forum ID: Emperor Fossil
Playing through *Virtua Cop 2* in the arcades, then turning around to find that a Japanese man in a black Yakuza-like business suit had been watching me for some time. Jiggling with enthusiasm, he said to me: "You are … very good!" "Well, I've played it a lot," I replied, laughing awkwardly while wondering if he was about to whip out some kind of Sega badge and, in a scene vaguely like something from *The Last Starfighter*, escort me off to Sega HQ to be their resident crack shot lightgun game tester.

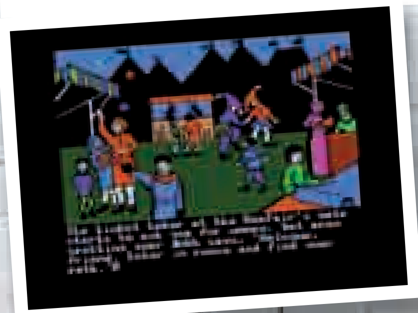


Forum ID: djcarlos
The first time I had a go on a PlayStation. It was at my loaded mate's house and he had just got one of those newfangled Sony consoles with *Time Crisis* and a Gcon45, and a big telly (for the time) to play it on. I got a little bit excited playing it, wrenched the gun out of the console, dragging the PlayStation onto the floor from it's lofty perch. Cue breaking of plastic, scratching of disc, pointing of finger, general blushing. Followed by, "Don't worry mate, I'll get my dad to pick up another one on his way home from work." Which he did. We were shooting again within the hour.

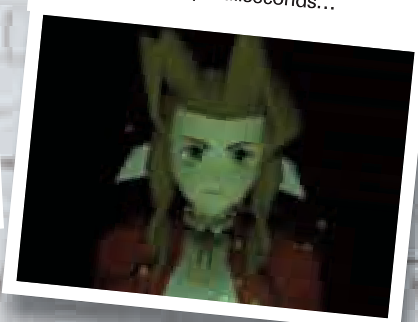
Forum ID: fgasking
Taking part in a *Quake* tournament at my old secondary school against 15-20 others and winning it (even though I'd never played the game before). All that after being taunted by many of them for being into "crappy" retro games and that they were far better gamers because of that.



Forum ID: Tabe
Sitting down to play *Ultima IV* at 8pm on the family Apple IIe. I looked up an hour later, thinking, 'Wow, it sure is cold in here'. I looked around and all the lights in the house were off, except the one where I was sitting. My parents and brother had all gone to bed and they had turned down the heat, which is why I was cold. I then looked at the clock – it was 4am. I'd been playing for eight straight hours and had no clue.



Forum ID: Smurph
Final Fantasy VII. Glandular fever. A month in bed. Plus, some absolutely outstanding tournaments on *Unirally* with a load of mates. The swearing that game causes when you lose by milliseconds…



Forum ID: sscott
Completing the Water Temple in *Ocarina Of Time*. Phew!

Forum ID: forestville
When I got *F-Zero* on the SNES. Experiencing those Mode 7 graphics for the first time just blew me away.





Forum ID: Dynamite Dan
Finally getting to the third boss in *Pong* (There's always one – Ed)

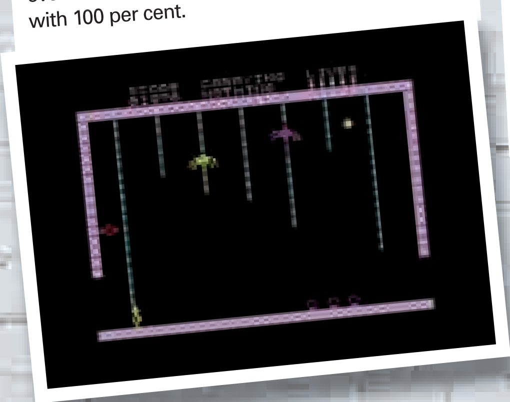


Forum ID: Confessor
Rediscovering videogames two years ago when a girlfriend gave me her old PSone for free. And enjoying the pleasure of finishing some of the games for the first time in my life.

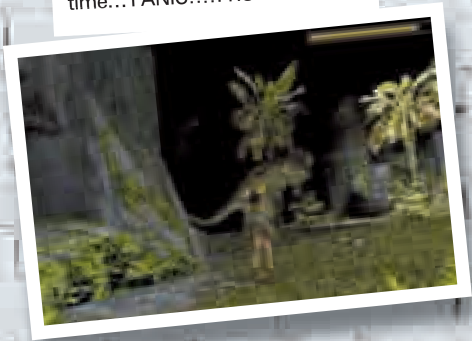
Forum ID: ColonelK
The first time I played Doom on a network, jeysus, that was ace!

READERS' TOP GAMING MOMENTS

Forum ID: necro
It took 20 years for me to finally get my ultimate gaming moment. One of my all-time favourite games for the Spectrum is *Chuckie Egg II*. I had been everywhere in that game and had seen every room. I had collected all ingredients and toy parts, but could never complete it. I turned the generator on but then went back the same way, thus turning it off again preventing me from completing the game. I recently found out that a funny green cactus thingy was actually a ladder I could pick up. I don't know what made me think of it but I tried picking it up and it enabled me to get back up a different way, keeping the generator running. I had goose bumps playing the rest of the game because I knew what needed to be done in order to complete it, and, when I did, I felt nothing but relief. Twenty years of weight was lifted off my shoulders. Nothing has compared to that – not even completing *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* with 100 per cent.



Forum ID: Randall Flagg
Hearing that annoying, ear-grating two-tone beep the first time I turned on my BBC Micro B. Oh and *Tomb Raider*. Seeing the T-Rex coming towards you in the lost valley for the first time… PANIC!!!!! RUN AWAY!!!!!



Forum ID: sleeper77
Getting my Amiga 500 for the first time. For me it was a massive leap from 8-bit to 16-bit gaming, without wanting to start an 8-bit/16-bit argument, of course.

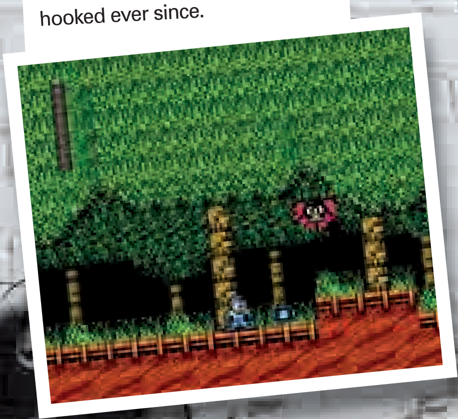


Forum ID: Overheat
My goodness I've had so many retro moments, but I have to say my most memorable videogame moment is with a more modern console, the 32-bit legend that is the Sony PlayStation. And as original as I'd like to be, again I have to disappoint by withholding obscurity and letting out the words, *Final Fantasy VIII*. Still one of the best games I've ever played, but my particularly favourite moment comes in the space scene with Squall and Rinoa on the Ragnarok. There's just so much emotion in this scene, it grips me like I never thought a videogame could; a lump in the throat, and a shiver down my spine as the FMV concludes. Pure gaming ecstasy.



Forum ID: mohicankid
About a year-and-a-half ago I rediscovered old-school gaming in the form of a NES and *Castlevania*! Now I can't stop buying any bit of gaming history I can get my grubby little fingers on. I've even started buying cables and leads at car-boot sales on the off chance I'll get the system they belong to!

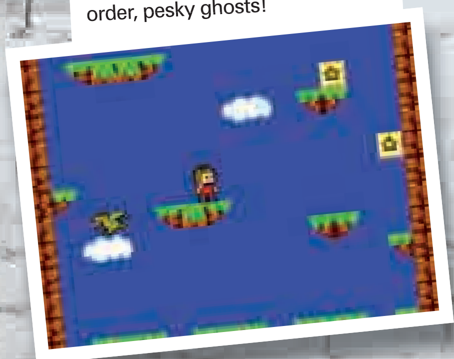
Forum ID: ShadowMan
Playing *Mega Man 2* for the very first time on my NES. I've been hooked ever since.



Forum ID: 1500graham
We take it for granted now but at the time blowing a zombie's head clean off with a shotgun or magnum in *Resident Evil 2* was tremendous!



Forum ID: Dan1980
Completing *Alex Kidd In Miracle World* on the MS when I was 14 without cheating at the end. Although I did die a lot trying to jump on the boxes in the correct order, pesky ghosts!

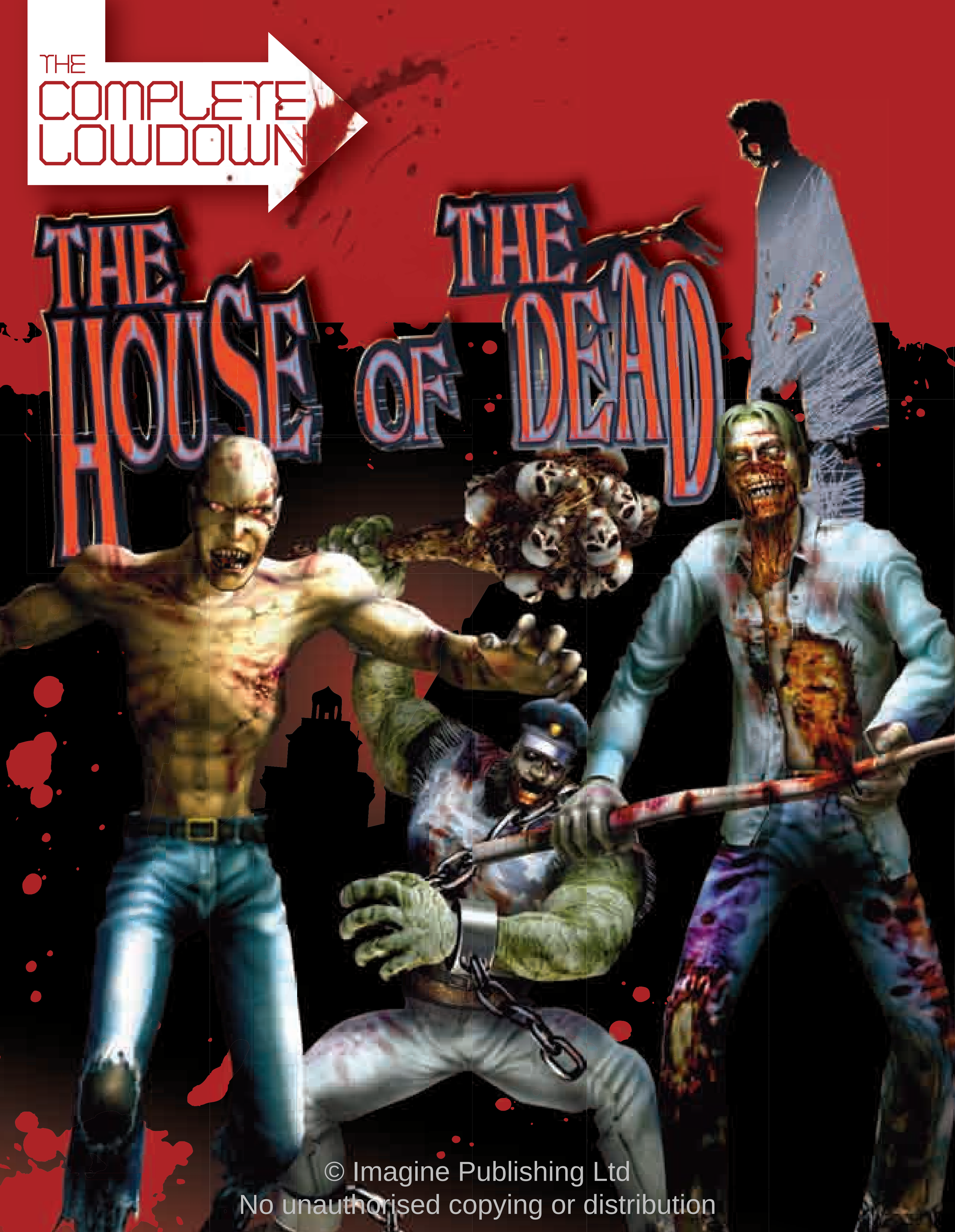


Forum ID: Demonblaze
Getting a dose of crabs from a prostitute and watching my crotch explode (damn forgot to wear my lubber) in the SVGA *Leisure Suit Larry*. Watching Aeris die in *Final Fantasy VII* is another.

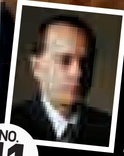


Forum ID: reech
Shedding a tear as I completed *Final Fantasy II* (as it was known back then, *FFIV* now!) on the SNES. Awwwwww!

Forum ID: Baki
Booting my Saturn with *Daytona* for the first time… 'Daytonaaaaa it's moving!' Hell yeah!


THE COMPLETE LOWDOWN
THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD

GAMES THAT CHANGED OUR LIVES



NO. 11

ROLAND PERRY
(former Amstrad group technical manager)
Harrier Attack (Amstrad CPC)

Harrier Attack was one of the first to be produced on the CPC and it gave us real confidence that the hardware could support a successful classic videogame. It brings back those first few months when I was playing it and trying to convince my colleagues that we had more than a one-season wonder, and that the CPC would be as well known as the Spectrum and C64. But I still can't believe how many we went on to sell.

THE COMPLETE LOWDOWN

THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD

1996-2008

ASHLEY DAY IS CURRENTLY SUFFERING "LIKE G DID". BUT ENOUGH ABOUT HIS PROBLEMS, WHY NOT READ A COMPLETE GUIDE TO ONE OF THE GREATEST LIGHTGUN FRANCHISES OF ALL TIME?



» The Extreme mode in *House Of The Dead 2 & 3 Return* allows you to strike close-up zombies with your shotgun. It's quite a cool feature and we'd like to see it in *The House Of The Dead 5*, if it ever gets made.

What could be more 'retro' than a lightgun game? Think about it. The concept is exactly the same now as it was over 80 years ago (the earliest lightgun games used moving pieces and vacuum tube amplifiers, whatever they are). Things move and you shoot them, with a pretend gun. From early classics like *Operation Wolf* and *Duck Hunt*, to genre-defining hits like *Virtua Cop*, lightgun games offer good, simple fun that's as instantly rewarding as any golden age coin-op.

Because of these similarities, it's hard to pick just one game that best represents the oft-overlooked genre, but if you were to judge the style on longevity as well as quality then *The House Of The Dead* would surely be a strong contender. Since its first arcade appearance in 1996 the series has managed to remain extremely popular while every one of its peers, with the possible exception of *Time Crisis*, has been lost to the sands of time. Three sequels, loads of console ports and a bunch of very strange spin-off games make it the most prolific franchise of its kind – and rightly so.

It's unclear exactly where the idea for *The House Of The Dead* first came from. Though Sega itself tells us that the intention was always to make something with a different pace to *Virtua Cop* (released two years earlier), there is surely more to it than that. Could it be a coincidence, for example, that the *House Of The Dead* series made its debut in the very same year that the first *Resident Evil* game arrived on PlayStation? We asked Sega if Capcom's survival horror had any influence on the series, but the developer declined to respond. That's not unusual, especially when speaking to a Japanese company, but it does leave us open to speculate. The timely release does suggest a feeling within the industry that zombie games were about to become popular and it's entirely plausible that one company heard about the other's game and decided they had to have their own slice of the market. We've seen it happen time and again in the film industry – *Deep Impact/Armageddon, Antz/A Bug's Life* – so why not with games?

Then there's that title. It may have been literally linked to the main setting of the game – a spooky mansion owned by the villain, Dr Curien – but it's also a title that's been used before. First published in 1862, Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The House Of The Dead* is a Russian novel about a group of convicts in a Siberian prison camp. The plot's a tiny bit different to the Sega arcade game, we must admit, but it's quite likely that someone at Sega liked the title and decided it would work well with the theme of its horrific shooting game.

Enough speculation! What we can say with absolute certainty is that when we first played *The House Of The Dead* we were instantly delighted by it. Though the gameplay was more or less the same as a hundred other games we'd played before, there was something that little bit special about this one that meant we would keep returning for years to come. The main reason was the gore. It wasn't realistic gore, as the Model 2 arcade board just wasn't capable of that much detail, but that actually made it better. If *The House Of The Dead* had photorealistic visuals we probably would have thrown up all over the screen. Such was the level of destruction on display. Every shot tore



WEAPON OF CHOICE

THE LIGHTGUN PERIPHERALS THAT BROUGHT THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD HOME

VIRTUA GUN
First introduced for the purpose of playing *Virtua Cop* on the Saturn, the Virtua Gun was used for all of the console's subsequent lightgun games. Though the Japanese model sported a sleek black look, the UK version was painted blue to avoid confusion with real firearms. The design of the gun is identical to that of the gun used on all of Sega's arcade games of the time and is just as accurate and reliable.



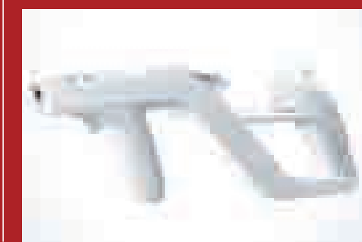
DREAMCAST GUN
The unoriginally titled Dreamcast Gun is a lot less realistic looking than its Saturn parent, but it does come with a lot more features. Fitting the gun with a D-pad was quite an innovative feature at the time and was intended to allow third parties more flexibility in their game design. The open slot at the back of the gun allowed either a Visual Memory Unit or a Rumble Pak to be inserted.



SNIPER SCOPE
Microsoft never made an official lightgun for Xbox, but there were lots of third-party options. The best one for *House Of The Dead III* was produced by Titan Concepts and was intended for use with *Silent Scope Complete*. Though the gun looked like a sniper rifle, it could be dismantled so that it resembled a shotgun, complete with pump-action reload – perfect for *House Of The Dead III*.



Wii ZAPPER
Not actually a lightgun, Nintendo's Zapper is more of a cradle in which to house the Wii Remote and Nunchuk. Doing so allows the pointer functionality of the Remote to better resemble an arcade lightgun. The Zapper has led to a renaissance of lightgun shooters on the Wii including the first home conversion of Sega's *Ghost Squad* as well as *House Of The Dead 2 & 3 Return*.





off a part of a zombie's body, its limbs, its head or maybe even a chunk of its torso… all in a gushing shower of bright red blood. It might be a bit childish, and it may not be too fashionable to admit to these days, but we enjoyed every blood-drenched moment of the action.

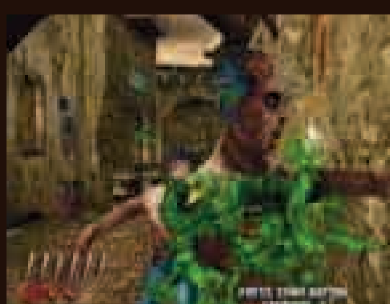
The House Of The Dead didn't just impress because of its blood and guts (we do have some standards, you know), as there were also a number of genuine gameplay innovations beneath the shocks. Though older lightgun games, such as Konami's *Crypt Killer*, had featured multiple routes before, none of them had quite used them as cleverly as *The House Of The Dead* did. If we'd just been flicking through our newly bought encyclopedias we might say that *The House Of The Dead*'s multiple routes were more diegetic than those in other games. On other, less verbose, days we might simply say that they fit into the story and logic of the game world better than in any other title. Rather than simple menus that invited you to turn left or right, *The House Of The Dead* actually reacted to your actions within the game and changed the path and story accordingly as it went along. At the very start, for example, you come across an innocent civilian who is about to be thrown from a bridge by a member of the undead. Kill the zombie before it's too late and you'll progress straight into Curien Mansion through the front door. Fail to save the civilian, however, and you'll have to take the long way round, through the sewers. The consequences of each of these path-changing decisions were not always apparent, which meant that *The House Of The Dead* leant itself more to replayability than Sega's previous games as players would have to actively experiment, forcing themselves to play differently every time in order to see all the possibilities. It was a popular trademark of the first game and one that was used again, in some form or another, throughout the rest of the series.

Being such a popular game, it wasn't long before *The House Of The Dead* was ported to Sega's 'console du jour', the Saturn. Expectations were high after the startlingly good port of *Virtua Cop 2*. But when Sega handed the coding duties to Australian developer Tantalus, alarm bells began to ring. The resulting conversion was far below that of the arcade game, mostly thanks to some ugly textures and shockingly low polygon counts. In addition, the game was dogged by slowdown and suffered from the dreaded flashing white screen whenever a player fired a shot, which was often. In fairness, *The House Of The Dead* was a much more graphically enhanced game than *Virtua Cop 2* so it would have been harder to convert to the inferior Saturn hardware, but we can't help but feel that Sega's in-house teams could have done a better job.

We can forgive Sega for not converting the game itself, however, as it was far too busy at the time, working on the stunning arcade sequel *The House Of The Dead 2*. Running on the then state-of-the-art arcade system known as NAOMI (New Arcade Operation Machine Idea), the sequel was a stunning looking game that put its two-year-old predecessor to shame. The game had more animation, more detailed textures and, of course, more gore. The multiple route system seemed even cleverer this time, the bosses were bigger and badder and the guitar-rock soundtrack enhanced the drama perfectly.



» That's the problem with zombies, they just won't observe the proper etiquette of lawn tennis.



» Some home versions of *The House Of the Dead 2* force you to play with green blood. Rubbish!





STEPHEN LANDRUM
(Summer Games creator at Epyx)
Fantasy RPGs

No. 12

My history with playing videogames goes all the way back to the beginning with *Pong, Space Invaders* and *Asteroids*, but for me, the genre of fantasy role-playing game has proved most important rather than any individual title. I played games like *Ultima, Bard's Tale*, the *Might & Magic* series, and even console games like *The Legend Of Zelda* and many others, even some of the online role-playing games like *Diablo, EverQuest* and others. I love them.

THE BRAINS OF THE DEAD

AROUND THE RELEASE OF HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2 & 3 RETURN, RETRO GAMER SAT DOWN WITH THE CREATORS OF THE ORIGINAL ARCADE GAME TO PICK THEIR BRAINS ON THE SERIES' DEVELOPMENT

Retro Gamer: Where did the idea for the original *House Of The Dead* arcade game come from?
Sega: The original idea to start the project was to position the title apart from Sega's other gun-shooting games, to create different types of games than titles such as *Virtua Cop* or *Gunblade NY*, and also somehow make the title have a distinct horror taste that is more suspenseful than most lightgun games.

Retro Gamer: How does using zombies as enemies affect the pace and gameplay of a lightgun game? Do you have to approach the design in a different way to something like *Virtua Cop*?
Sega: Using zombies as enemies enabled us to create a realistic sense of dread that other creatures such as ghosts or monsters cannot offer. Unlike *Virtua Cop*, the *House Of The Dead* series depicts fear of zombies by using the approach that enemies come closer to players and attack in the game.

Retro Gamer: With regards to the recently released Wii game, why did Sega choose to convert *House Of The Dead 2 & 3* but not *1* and *4*?
Sega: *House Of The Dead 2* and *House Of The Dead III* were the most popular titles among the fans and there was a strong demand to port those titles from them. And also, from the technical standpoint, we knew that those two titles would demonstrate the best performance for Nintendo Wii.

Retro Gamer: What is your favourite *The House Of The Dead* game so far and why?
Sega: We have to say all of them. We have a special feeling for each title and can't just pick one of them…

Retro Gamer: What does the future hold for *House Of The Dead*? Will there ever be a fifth arcade instalment? Could we see more spin-off games?
Sega: We're afraid that we do not have any information that can be released at the moment. But, we can say that we will continue to expand the franchise that is well loved by many fans.

Retro Gamer: What did you think of the *House Of The Dead* movies? How much creative involvement did Sega have with those films?
Sega: In the movie there are some scenes where some small effects are introduced that only people who have played the game can notice, which made us think that the movie production team had loyalty to the *House Of The Dead* brand.

Retro Gamer: Have you played *Typing Of The Dead* much and did it make you a better typist?
Sega: Of course we have! I believe my typing skill has improved a lot!



» The recently announced *English Of The Dead*. We always assumed that zombies only spoke in grunts and growls.

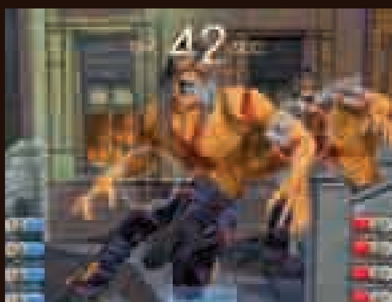


» Segata Sanshiro is a strange character that Sega invented to advertise the Saturn. Here he is, trying to convince a few zombies that the *House Of The Dead* port was worth buying.

It also had the silliest voice track we've ever heard in a game – the acting being so bad that it was even worse than the infamous *Resident Evil*, though we'd never hold that fact against it. The cheesy dialogue, half-hearted acting and terribly written one-liners only make the game more fun to play through and have left an indelible stain on our memories over the years. *The House Of The Dead 2* is by far the best in the series because it takes everything that was good about the first game and turns it up to 11. Naturally, if the following Dreamcast version had been as poor as the Saturn game then we would have been very unhappy Sega fans back in 1999. Thankfully, however, there were no such problems. The Dreamcast console used virtually identical technology to the NAOMI arcade system, which meant that Sega was able to port the game over in more or less arcade-perfect condition. Imagine that; within six months of the game hitting the arcades, fans were able to play a practically identical version in the comfort of their own home. And this time they got even more for their money as the Dreamcast version came with a new Original mode, which featured weapon and health upgrades hidden throughout the game to be found and used on subsequent play-throughs.

It was obviously a great time to be a *House Of The Dead* fan in the late-Nineties. That is, if you weren't an American at least. In addition to having to put up with green blood instead of red (a crime that has been corrected in the new Wii version) US Dreamcast owners also faced the shocking news that they would not be able to play the game with the official Sega lightgun. As a result of the Columbine High School massacre of 1999, America had become very sensitive about the link between entertainment and firearms. As such Sega declined to release its Dreamcast gun in the States and even locked compatibility out of the software to stop gamers from using an imported Japanese gun. Thankfully, a number of third-party alternatives were released that ensured that Americans wouldn't have to play the likes of *The House Of The Dead 2* and *Confidential Mission* with a joypad. It does make you wonder why Sega bothered releasing these games at all, however, if it never intended for them to be played properly.

Two more arcade sequels were produced in the following decade but we won't dwell on them too much, this



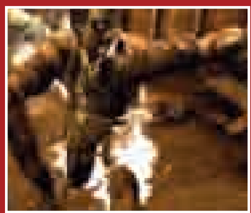
» *House Of The Dead 3*, how it was intended, in cel-shaded form. Personally we prefer this to the style of the eventual release.



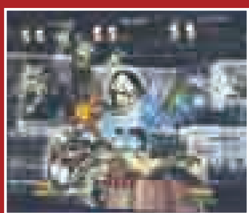
"2008 MAY BE THE BIGGEST YEAR FOR THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD SERIES SO FAR. THE FRANCHISE WILL ENJOY FOUR NEW RELEASES"

ATTACK OF THE CLONES

FIVE GAMES THAT FOLLOWED IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF HOUSE OF THE DEAD

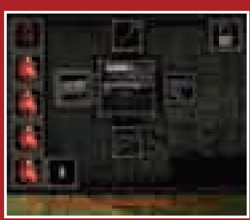


RESIDENT EVIL GUN SERIES
Capcom, 2000-2007
There have been loads of *Resident Evil* lightgun games over the years, from the *Gun Survivor* series, to the PS2's *Dead Aim* and the recently released *The Umbrella Chronicles* on Wii. All of the games have disappointed in some way. Fans of the *Resident Evil* storyline backed away from the earliest games because they were non-canonical, for example. *Umbrella Chronicles* rectified this but was a letdown in the gameplay department as it stuck too closely to survival-horror conventions, which don't really work in a lightgun context. The zombies moved too slowly, which led to a lack of tension, while having to collect ammo was just a chore.



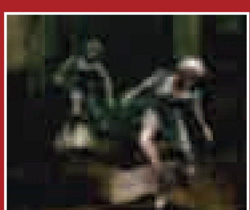
EVIL NIGHT
Konami, 1998
This little-known arcade game is probably more famous for the hardware it ran on than the game itself. The board inside the coin-op was basically a Panasonic M2, the machine that was meant to be the console follow-up to the 3DO.

Nevertheless, *Evil Night* is a fairly decent game and quite interesting in that it allowed three players to play at the same time. The gameplay is basically the same as *The House Of The Dead*, though it does make the mistake of not allowing you to kill zombies with a single headshot. Which kind of misses the point of making a zombie lightgun game at all.



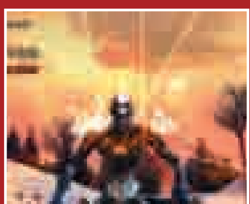
DEAD 'N' FURIOUS
Dream On Studio, 2007
The Nintendo DS has actually had a couple of lightgun-style games released for it, albeit with the stylus used in place of a gun. We're not convinced that the handheld is suited to the genre as tapping an enemy is much easier than aiming a plastic firearm. Nevertheless, it wasn't too long before a *House Of The Dead*-style game arrived in the form of *Dead 'N' Furious*, or the sickly titled *Touch The Dead* as it's known Stateside.

Dead 'N' Furious isn't actually that good, unfortunately. Mostly because the developers tried to compensate for the ease of stylus use by making every zombie take about five or six hits before it dies. This makes it incredibly difficult to not get bitten when there's more than one zombie on screen at once. Shame.



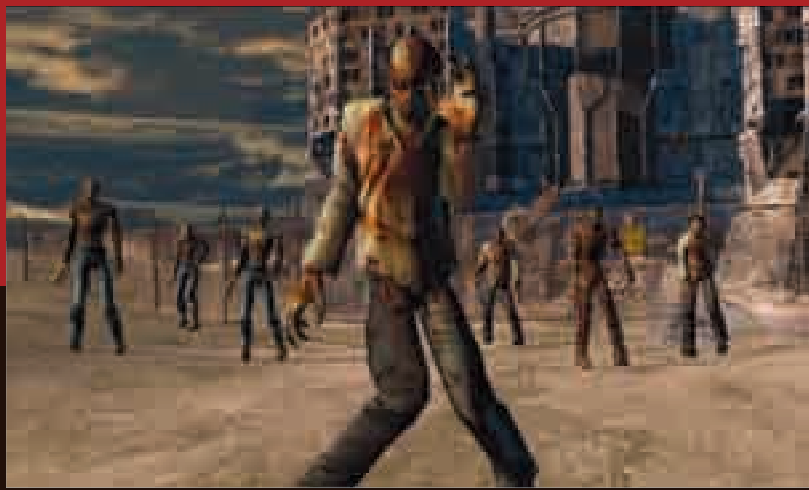
SILENT HILL: THE ARCADE
Konami, 2007
We wouldn't have thought that the *Silent Hill* series' brand of psychological horror was appropriate for a guns-blazing arcade game, but Konami went ahead and made the game anyway.

The grainy, difficult-to-see visuals are brilliant, in our opinion, as they hark back to the best games in the *Silent Hill* series (the first two) but fans have not been kind to this arcade game as its fast-paced action is completely at odds with the franchise's usual tone. As a lightgun game in its own right, however, *Silent Hill: The Arcade* is a pretty decent game with a unique (for a coin-op) visual style. If you're lucky enough to find a cabinet, you should definitely give it a whirl.



VAMPIRE NIGHT
Sega, 2000
This one was made by the same team behind *The House Of The Dead* yet was strangely distributed by Namco.

The game is basically *House Of The Dead* in all but name, just with the zombies replaced by vampires. Though there are no multiple routes here, rescue shots are still in use (you have to shoot parasites off human bodies before they're turned into vampires) and Sega's trademark terrible voice actors are out in full force. It's not quite as good as the *House Of The Dead* games, but you could do a lot worse than pick up the PS2 version of *Vampire Night*, especially as it includes a new RPG mode with added objectives.



» "Cause This Is Thriller, Thriller Night!" Sorry.

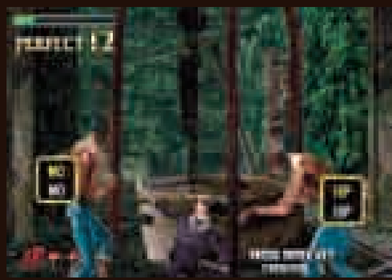
is a retro magazine after all. Though as mentioned above, the gameplay of these titles has changed so little over the years that we'd be shocked to find any retro gamer that didn't want to pop a few 50 pence pieces in their coin slots.

The House Of The Dead III was originally announced in 2001 and looked very different at that stage to how it appears now. Early press images showed a very cartoony cel-shaded style, similar to the one that was pioneered by Sega in *Jet Set Radio*. The style was soon removed from *The House Of The Dead III*, however, due to feedback from fans, who considered the style too immature for a horror game. The game ran on the Xbox-based Chihiro hardware, just like *OutRun 2*, and was naturally ported to the Xbox console a few months later.

The House Of The Dead 4 followed in 2005 and ran on Lindbergh, an arcade system so powerful that it allowed many more zombies than ever before to be displayed on screen. The guns themselves also made use of modern technology and could be shaken to reload and escape from a zombie's grip. The game has yet to be converted to a home console and as Sega tells us that it intends for all its future lightgun releases to be on Nintendo Wii, it's safe to assume that we won't be seeing a home version of *House Of The Dead 4*, at least in this generation.

Just as interesting as the main sequels are *The House Of The Dead*'s many, many spin-off games. Ranging from typing tutors, to pinball sims and even tennis games, these spin-offs and cameos show just how much fondness Sega's internal teams have for the franchise, as well as showcasing a great sense of humour that's sorely lacking in most other developers. Could you ever imagine the cast of *Time Crisis* running around with keyboards strapped to them, for example? No, neither could we.

And the horror madness continues as 2008 may well be the biggest year for *The House Of The Dead* so far. The franchise will enjoy four new releases this year (see our family tree) and though not a single one of them is *House Of The Dead 5*, it seems to us that Sega is tactically using these re-releases, spin-offs and cameos to raise awareness of the franchise in order to pave the way for a full-blown sequel. Whether that sequel happens in this decade or the next, on consoles or in the arcade, we're certain that we won't have to wait too long until the dead rise again.



» Try typing both of these at the same time. We bet you can't do it.

IF YOU PLAY ONE HOUSE OF THE DEAD GAME… PLAY THIS…



HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2
It may not have done much more than the first game, technically speaking, but this is definitely our favourite. If we're honest, it has nothing to do with the gameplay and more to do with the absurdly bad voice acting. When the characters aren't spurting out amazingly quotable one-liners, they're delivering their lines with so little effort that we can't help but laugh. You could have fun just watching someone else play this, as long as they don't skip the cut-scenes.

THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD FAMILY TREE



THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD

System: Arcade, Saturn, PC
Year Released: 1996

Building on the success of *Virtua Cop* and riding a new wave of horror videogames, *House Of The Dead* burst on to coin-ops in 1996 and can still be found in most arcades. The scary visuals and multiple routes made this an instant hit and the Saturn version, which came a year later, was hotly anticipated as a consequence. In many ways this classic is still the best in the series.

LIVES



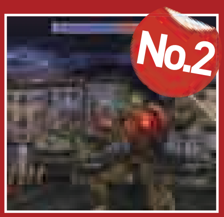
DAVE NEEDLE (creator of the Atari Lynx)
Computer Space

In college, I was an ordinary engineer, destined for an ordinary life in a large pond of engineers. In 1969, I made a Pong game at home. It was fun to play, but I didn't see the gigantic value in the concept, for me it was just a science experiment. Two years later, I was visiting my cousin in California. We went to Santa Monica, where I noticed Computer Space in a restaurant. I was captured. This was the most exciting use of electronics I'd ever seen. It was not the internal technology, but the concept of making a real-time interactive display system for fun. That moment changed my life. I knew then that my path would be in videogames.

NO. 13

THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2

System: Arcade, Dreamcast, PC
Year Released: 1998



A bigger and better sequel running on Sega's NAOMI hardware, *House Of The Dead 2* is notable for its auto-reload feature. The system was simple but effective and well liked enough that it's been used in many Sega games since. The Dreamcast port was intended to include the first game as a bonus, but bugs during development prevented it from appearing in the eventual release.

ZOMBIE REVENGE

System: Arcade, Dreamcast
Year Released: 1999



Zombie Revenge is a scrolling beat-'em-up in which members of the AMS engage the zombies in a good old-fashioned fist fight. Rather absurdly, the mindless undead hit back or even pick up handguns and open fire on you. It's all very silly but that somehow makes it more fun. Rumour has it that *Zombie Revenge* was originally intended to be *Streets Of Rage 4*.

THE TYPING OF THE DEAD

System: Arcade, Dreamcast, PC, PS2
Year Released: 1999



Another spin-off, this one wackier than the last. It follows the same story and scenarios as *House Of The Dead 2* but instead of shooting the zombies you defeat them with a typewriter! Words pop up and you must type them in as quickly as possible, without mistakes, to kill the zombies. It's essentially a fun typing tutor. If you want an English version you'll need a US Dreamcast or the rare PC port.

THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD III

System: Arcade, Xbox, PC
Year Released: 2002



Returning to its roots, *House Of The Dead III* made its way to the arcades with a brilliant full-sized shotgun controller that reloaded with a quick pump of the barrel. Unlike previous games, the choice between multiple routes is made towards the start of each area. The subsequent PC and Xbox conversions feature a Time Attack mode but are otherwise identical to the Chihiro-powered coin-op.

THE PINBALL OF THE DEAD

System: Game Boy Advance
Year Released: 2002



Japanese pinball games are often crazy games that would never work in the real world and *Pinball Of The Dead* is no exception. Loosely based on *House Of The Dead 2*, the pinball table is swarming with zombies who can be crushed by rolling the ball over them. Later tables have huge bosses, taken from the game, that must be hit several times in order to defeat them.

THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD 4

System: Arcade
Year Released: 2005



Sega went with Uzis for the fourth game. They sprayed out bullets at a rapid rate and could also fire off a limited number of grenades, which was handy as the Lindbergh-powered coin-op was capable of displaying more on-screen zombies than ever before. Even better, the gun had a motion sensor that required the player to shake their Uzi whenever a zombie grabbed hold of them.

SEGA SUPERSTARS

System: PS2
Year Released: 2004



This mini-game collection was designed for Sony's EyeToy and featured many classic Sega games. *The House Of The Dead* game put your image in the middle of a zombie attack and challenged you to defend yourself by physically punching the monsters off the screen. Just like the lightgun games, innocent civilians will wander onto the screen and you must be careful not to hit them.

HOUSE OF THE DEAD 4 SPECIAL

System: Arcade
Year Released: 2006



In recent years Sega has made special editions of some of its arcade games. *House Of The Dead 4* is one such game and is a joy to play. It takes place on two 100-inch screens, one in front, and one behind the player, with the chairs automatically spinning around to face the attacks. Five surround sound speakers and a jet of air increase the feeling of immersion.

THE TYPING OF THE DEAD II

System: PC
Year Released: 2008



Quietly released in Japan only, *The Typing Of The Dead II* is much the same as its predecessor, but is based on *House Of The Dead III* and has not, to our knowledge, been released in arcades. Brilliantly, for an import, *Typing Of The Dead II* is fully compatible with Western keyboards thanks to the optional use of romanised Japanese words in game. Import it now if you're feeling exotic.

THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2 & 3 RETURN

System: Wii
Year Released: 2008



A great value double pack released to take advantage of the Wii's Zapper. The games are mostly the same as their arcade counterparts with the exception of a new Extreme mode in which the enemies are tougher to kill. A press of the A button in this mode, however, allows the player to perform a melee attack on nearby zombies and even to deflect some incoming projectiles.

SEGA SUPERSTARS TENNIS

System: DS, PS2, PS3, Xbox 360, Wii
Year Released: 2008



Much like the EyeToy game, *Sega Superstars Tennis* collects many of Sega's greatest mascots, this time for a game of tennis. None of the characters from *House Of The Dead* appear, but there is a court in which zombies roam around and get in the way. Although all of the courts in the game are named after their respective games, the *HOTD* court is called Curien Mansion.

ENGLISH OF THE DEAD

System: DS
Year Released: 2008

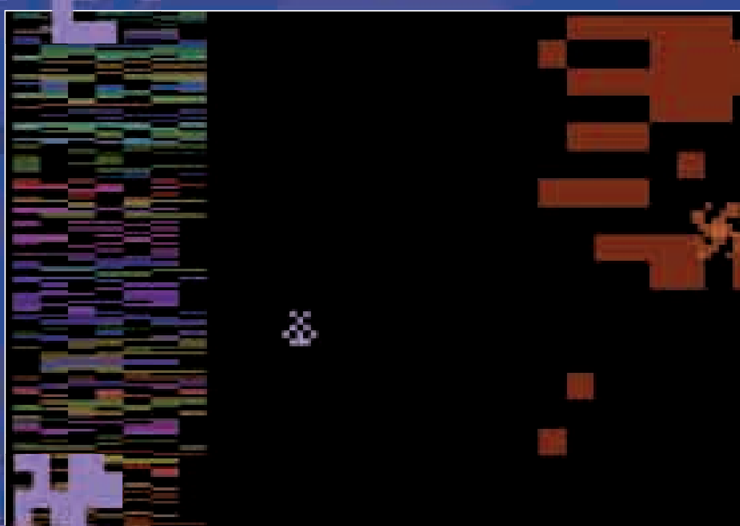


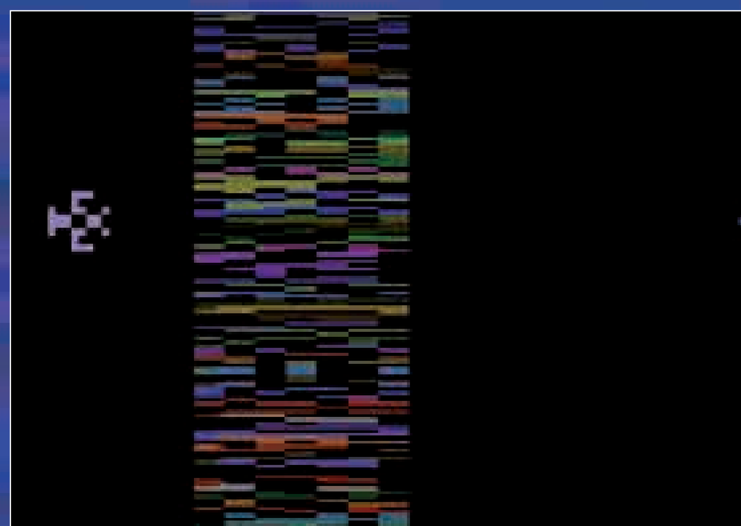
The DS has seen its fair share of software designed to teach English to Japanese gamers but this is surely the best. It's basically *Typing Of The Dead*, but instead of using a keyboard you have to handwrite the English translations of the Japanese words you see on screen. It's a great idea and we'd love to see a UK version that teaches us Japanese. We won't be holding our breath though.

THE CLASSIC GAME

YARS' REVENGE

So what makes a game timeless? Is it the characters, the graphics (we of all gamers know it's not that), the timing or innovation? As Stuart Hunt reveals, if the truth be known, all we need is a nice old slice of revenge

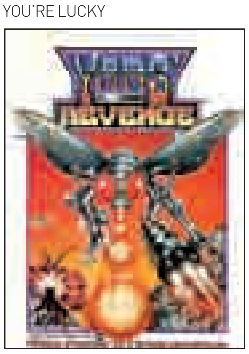




IN THE KNOW



» **PUBLISHER:** ATARI
» **DEVELOPER:** ATARI
» **RELEASED:** 1981
» **GENRE:** SHOOT-'EM-UP
» **EXPECT TO PAY:** A FEW QUID, IF YOU'RE LUCKY



Every now and then a game appears that becomes so synonymous with the machine it appears on that it almost seems to take on a life of its own. You think *Mario Kart*, you immediately think SNES; *Shenmue*: Dreamcast; *Chase HQ*: Alan Sugar. Howard Scott Warshaw was responsible for giving the 2600 its most commercially insolvent videogame – the most out-of-the-box thinking movie tie-in known to man: *E.T.*, and one of the greatest videogames ever: *Yars' Revenge*.

If there was any good to be found in *E.T.*, it's that it helped demonstrate that impressively technical things were possible on the Atari 2600, amazing effects that would be rushed into a crappy game about a homesick puppet falling down black holes. With *Yars' Revenge*, almost the same rules apply – almost. Warshaw shows us that he's more than adept at producing brilliant things on the Atari but, this time, uses these skills to create something special.

If you've ever watched the original commercial for *Yars' Revenge*, you'd be forgiven for thinking that the entire concept took Atari around 30 seconds to conjure up. A hirsute Atari coder (presumably) is seen perched in a chair, back to us, staring at a huge television. It's here that he casually plucks gaming ideas from his head. At the same time that the Qotile, the shield and Yar enter his skull, the game begins to take shape, in real-time, on the overtly large monitor in front of our very eyes.

Anyway, the point that this advert succeeds in making is this: *Yars' Revenge* is simple, and simplicity breeds addiction. *Tetris*, *Pac-Man* and *Yars' Revenge* all represent clearly defined rules of engagement across one game screen.

The greatest thing about *Yars' Revenge* is that it's a concentrated cartridge of brilliance. As many of you are probably aware (we're sure we've mentioned it once or thrice inside of 50 issues), *Yars' Revenge* took its name from the CEO of Atari, who at that time was Ray Kassar (Yar being Ray spelt backwards).

Yars' Revenge was loosely based on the 1980 Cinematronics arcade blaster *Star Castle*. With the deformation, the enemy shield you had to slowly pick away and the harassing torpedoes that followed your ship around, both games felt similar. However, in Atari's version the enemy target was moved from the centre to the far right of the screen, and this extra space allowed Warshaw to include an invulnerability field in the centre of the screen, known as the Neutral Zone, where Yar, a super-evolved mutant housefly, could nibble away at the shield that was protecting his target.



» The comic book makes for some good bedtime reading once you've finished playing the game.

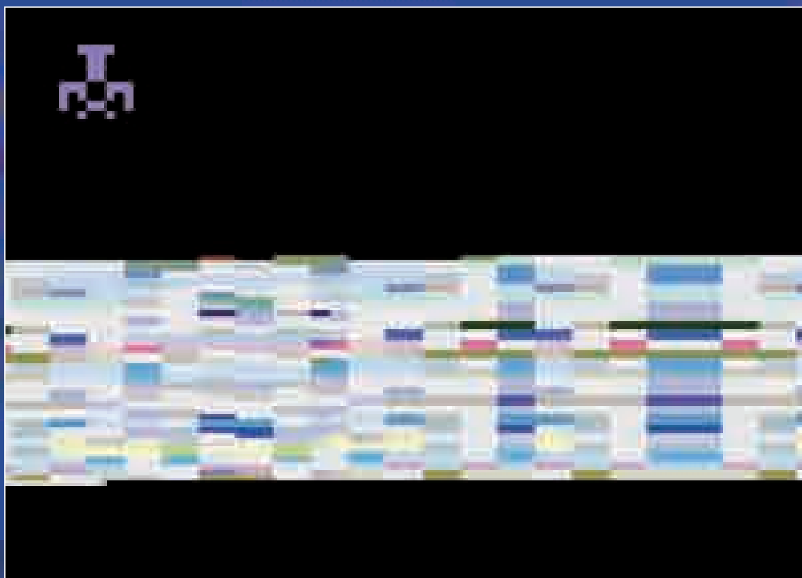
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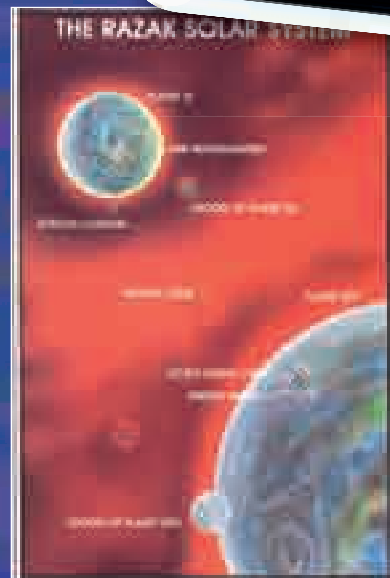
BILL KUNKEL (the "Games Doctor" and former editor of *America's Electronic Games* magazine

Tetris (Game Boy)

The most important game I've ever played is *Tetris*, perhaps the best example of a videogame ever created. *Tetris* is intuitive to the point where the average gamer could learn to play it in five minutes, yet could spend the rest of their life mastering it. It can only be played electronically: imagine the rig and equipment you'd need to attempt to approximate it in real life?



» "Great shot kid, that was one in a million."

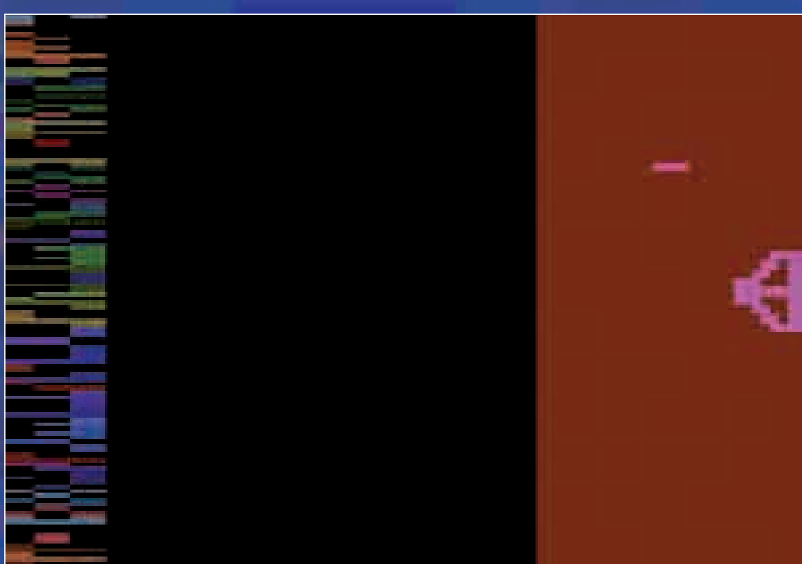


» The Razak solar system as shown in the *Yars'* comic book.

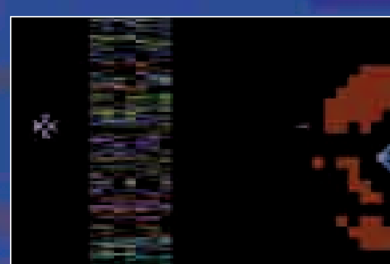
The Qotile was a triangular entity protected by an impervious homing missile that Yar could only safely touch when he was buzzing around inside the Neutral Zone. Unfortunately for Yar, continually forcing you out of your dazzling foxhole was the Qotile itself, which would annoyingly morph itself into a deadly swirl and spit at Yar like a demented scorpion. It was an enemy attack that would laugh in the face of the shield and force the player to skilfully dodge the powerful attack. To kill the Qotile you had to whittle away at his shield by firing missiles at it or simply flying up to it and eating away at it. Ultimately, the idea is to create an opening so Yar can touch the Qotile. This would summon the Zorlon Cannon: a secondary super-weapon powerful enough to blow the menace into smithereens that would hover up and down the left side of the screen.

Like *E.T.*, *Yars' Revenge* demonstrated some exceptional effects on the humble Atari 2600. For a start there were the blistering, screen-eating explosions that would occur when Yar blasted the Qotile with a timely blast of the Zorlon Cannon (which was most gratifying) and the mesmerising gyrating shield that shrouded the Qotile. Add to this the genuine air of tension the game emitted, and *Yars' Revenge* can easily be considered as the most nail-destroying blaster to ever appear on the 2600.

The game's peculiar backstory was brilliantly fleshed out in a mini-comic book that was bundled with the game. Called *The Quotile Ultimatum!* it detailed who the Yars were, how it was they turned from common housefly to angelic-looking humanoids and, more importantly, the actual rules of play. Of all the ten Atari-related comic books that were produced and packaged inside selective Atari 2600 games, *The Qotile Ultimatum!* is perhaps the most special. Why? Well the others were outsourced to comic stalwarts DC Comics, but *The Quotile Ultimatum!* was created entirely in-house and, surprisingly, it's not a bad little read either, as far as interstellar housefly warfare goes.



» Watch our for that jerk's swirl move, it's fast and unpredictable.



» *Yars'* is one of the best-looking games on the 2600. Straight up.

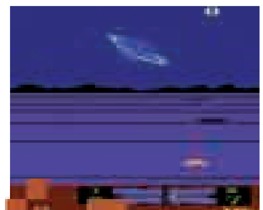
"WITH ITS GENUINE AIR OF TENSION, YARS' REVENGE CAN EASILY BE CONSIDERED AS THE MOST NAIL-DESTROYING BLASTER TO EVER APPEAR ON THE 2600"

DEVELOPER HIGHLIGHTS

E.T.
SYSTEM: ATARI 2600
YEAR: 1982

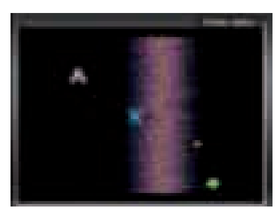
RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK
SYSTEM: ATARI 2600
YEAR: 1982

SOLARIS (PICTURED)
SYSTEM: ATARI 2600
YEAR: 1986



THE WHOLE NINE YARS

For many years no one would hear a peep out of the Yars; everyone would assume their mission was finished and they either perished or lived fruitful lives. That was until Telegames decided to dust off the game for a remake on the Game Boy Color. Despite looking pretty similar to the Atari original, the gameplay itself would be slightly different. Rather than having the action played out on one screen, the Game Boy Color version featured scrolling, making the Razak solar system slightly bigger. This meant that if you veered away from the Qotile you'd have to listen out for audio cues or keep a beady eye on an icon at the base of the screen to tell you whether it was prepping an attack. It does work pretty well. Also, Telegames introduced a secret warp-zone level that plonked Yar inside a rather basic side-scrolling blaster, and a password system that allowed you to, well… you get the idea.



THUNDERCATS

THUNDER, THUNDER, THUNDERCATS… NOOOOOOO!



» **PUBLISHER:** ELITE
» **RELEASED:** 1987
» **GENRE:** SCROLLING BEAT-'EM-UP
» **FEATURED HARDWARE:** ZX SPECTRUM/C64/ AMSTRAD CPC
» **EXPECT TO PAY:** £1+



HISTORY

"Wow! *Thundercats* is brilliant. The logo is very neatly drawn, and the in-game graphics match it; they're excellent in every respect. Considering that the programmers had to move the colour as well as the pixels, the scrolling is very smooth. At first, despite *Thundercat*'s playability, I didn't think it'd last The Treatment and still be addictive, but two days later they had to prise me away from my Spectrum with a crowbar to make me write this comment!"

The above quote comes from *Crash* magazine, where Elite's *Thundercats* received a Crash Smash and scored a whopping 91%. It's a shame the aforementioned crowbar wasn't actually used to beat some sense into the reviewer, because *Thundercats* is a truly insipid game that deserves none of the accolades it received back in the day.

Horrifically linear and scarier than a date with Mumm-Ra, *Thundercats* is a painful effort from Elite that is constantly unfair and features the sort of ropey collision detection that makes you want to chuck your QuickShot Pro through the nearest window. Sure, you could argue that the action is fast and furious, but because of the insane pace that Lion-O constantly runs at, nine times out of ten you simply career into someone before you've had a chance to react to what's happening on screen. Now how is that fair?

While there are several levels to play through and a smattering of side-missions to complete – that saw Lion-O rescuing his friends – they all highlight the same boring gameplay; meaning that once you've seen one level, you've effectively seen everything *Thundercats* has to offer.

Granted, it received glowing reviews from the vast majority of magazines at the time of its release (although *Your Sinclair* has drastically changed its tune by the time of its budget reissue), and yes, it was a fairly pretty game – we've included all three 8-bit systems here for you to squabble over – but *Thundercats* just leaves us cold. Great cartoon, shame about the game.



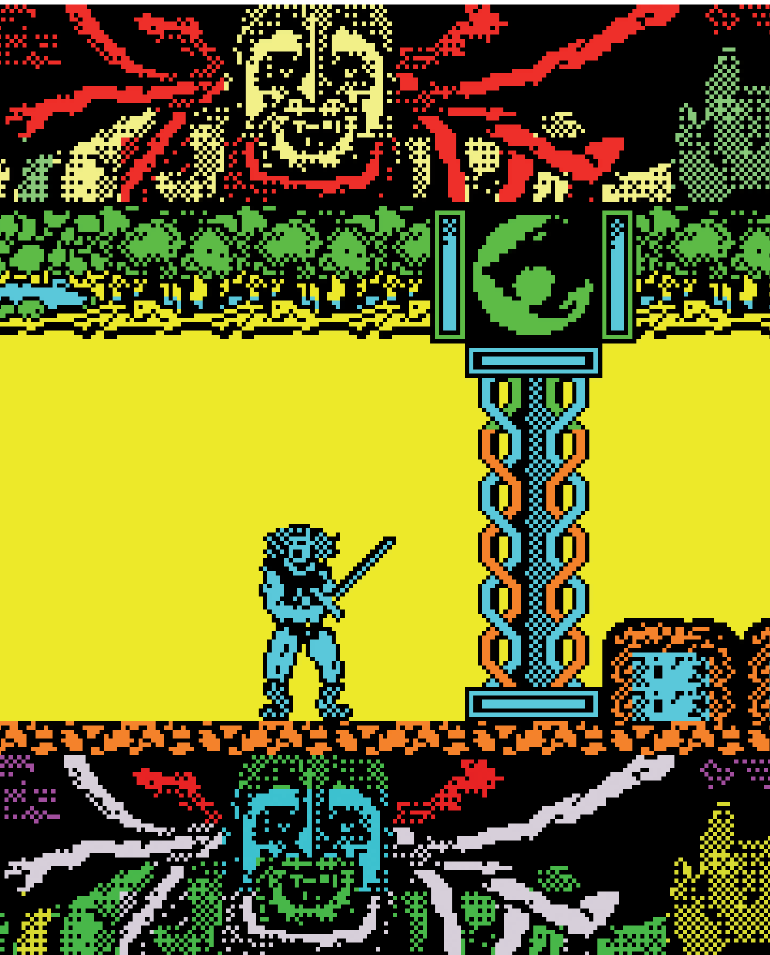
GAMES THAT CHANGED LIVES

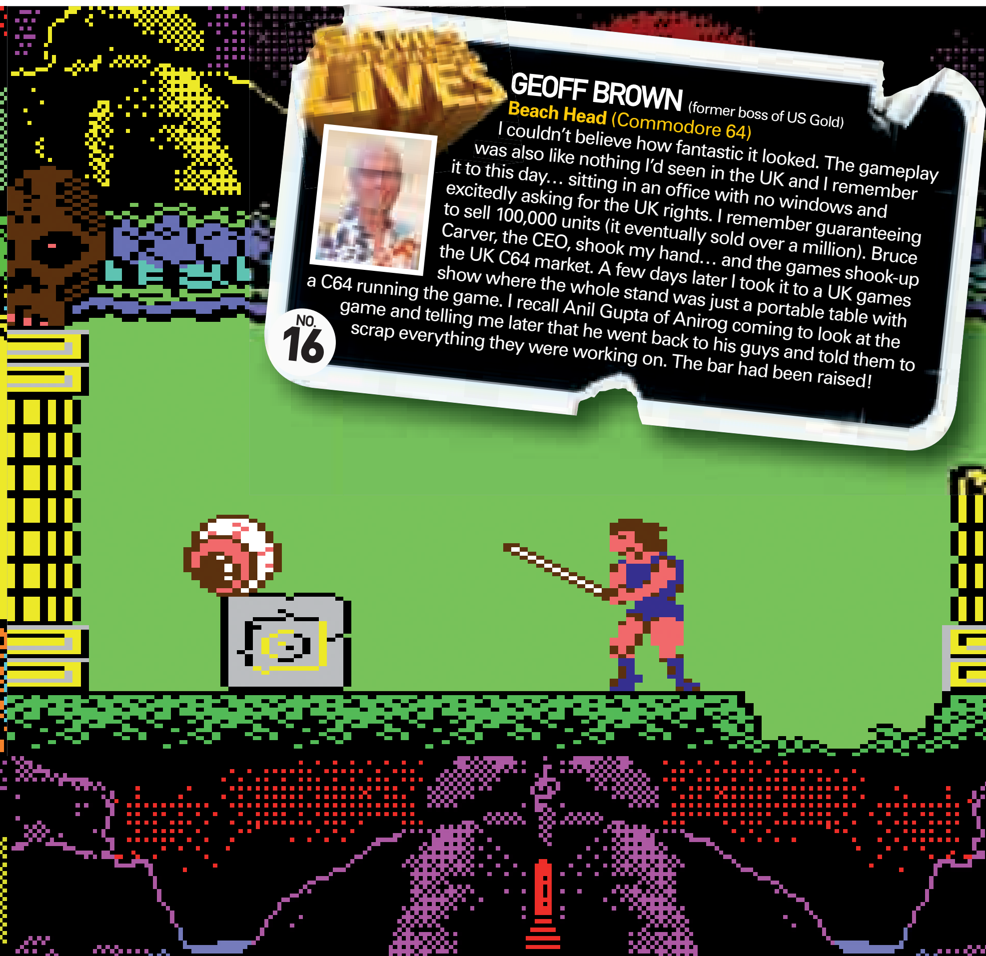
JON CARTWRIGHT (director of production, THQ Studio Australia, ex-Big Red Software)

Jet Set Willy (Spectrum)

Jet Set Willy had an unfeasible number of levels for the time and such variety. Miner Willy's house seemed a vast 'open world'. It perfected platforming interactions I'd first seen in Manic Miner that now seem so clichéd: collectable items, conveyors, crumbling blocks, and who could forget the swinging ropes? It also had that most British of traits, a sense of humour: from the level names, to the enemies and the Python-esque game over sequence. I never had a Spectrum so only played it at friends' houses. It did eventually come out on the Dragon 32 and I played it to death. An inspiration!

NO. 15



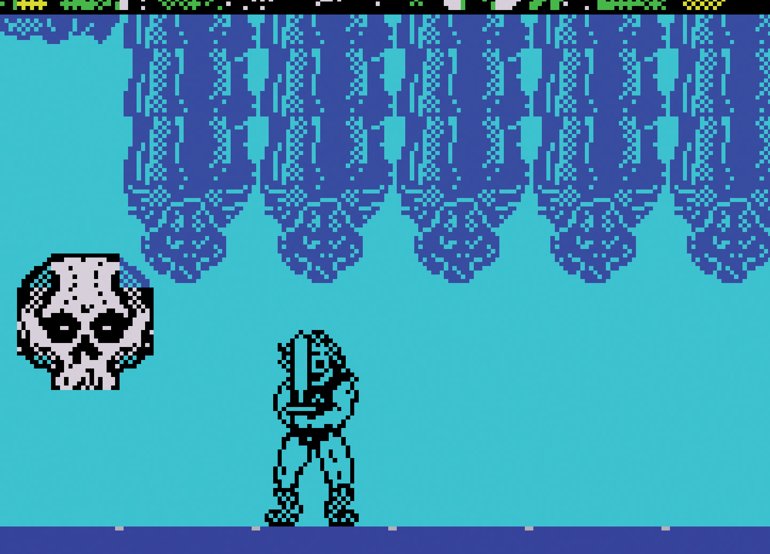


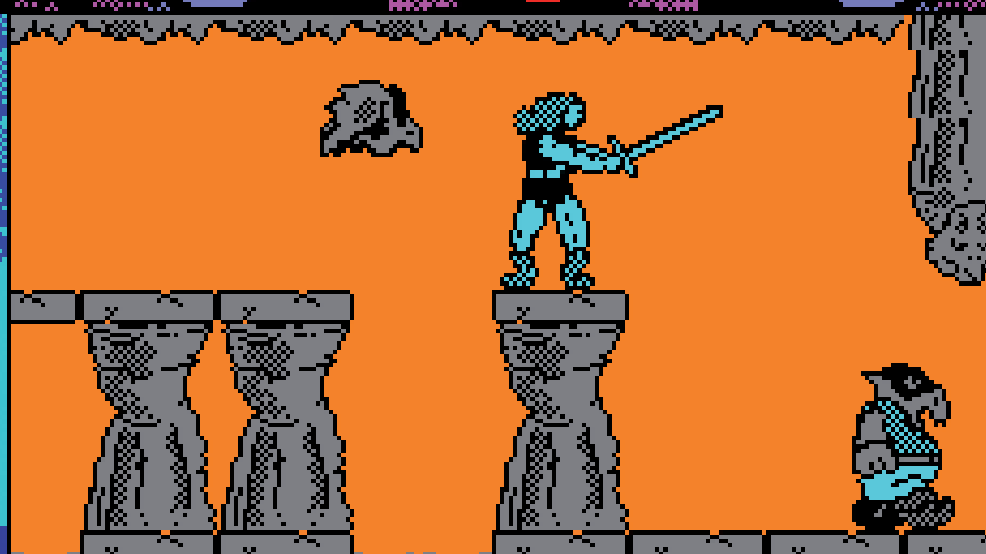
GEOFF BROWN (former boss of US Gold)

Beach Head (Commodore 64)

I couldn't believe how fantastic it looked. The gameplay was also like nothing I'd seen in the UK and I remember it to this day… sitting in an office with no windows and excitedly asking for the UK rights. I remember guaranteeing to sell 100,000 units (it eventually sold over a million). Bruce Carver, the CEO, shook my hand… and the games shook-up the UK C64 market. A few days later I took it to a UK games show where the whole stand was just a portable table with a C64 running the game. I recall Anil Gupta of Anirog coming to look at the game and telling me later that he went back to his guys and told them to scrap everything they were working on. The bar had been raised!

NO. 16









THE MAKING OF... Retro GAMER



Retro Gamer is largely about looking back, so what better way to celebrate this milestone issue than to chart the history of the magazine during its early days at Live Publishing. Former editor Martyn Carroll, with input from key contributors, tells the full and frank story behind the original incarnation of **Retro Gamer**

LIVES

NO. 17



CLIFF LAWSON

(principal software design engineer at Amstrad)

Manic Miner (Spectrum)

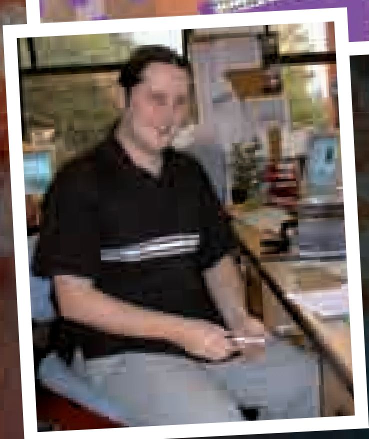
Manic Miner. We had various computers, some of which my brother and I built, but it was getting the Spectrum and *MM* as our first game that got us into microcomputers and micro controllers. Finding the magic LD HL,nnnnn; DEC (HL) that operated the life counter to allow us to get through all the levels with infinite lives opened up a Pandora's Box that it's not been possible to close in the last 25-30 years. When I got my first mobile that could download Java games, guess which was the first game I downloaded!



» With time – and decent artwork – available to him, Mat put together some really neat layouts. This *Street Fighter* retrospective really did hit like a 1,000-hand slap.



» This article about BASIC listings was hardly inspiring from a design point of view, but it actually resulted in one of the more inventive layouts.



» Editor Martyn Carroll pictured shortly after joining Live Publishing in 2000. His hair is now shorter – and greyer.

The happiest time of my tenure as Retro Gamer editor was at the first Classic Gaming Expo UK in July 2004. Live Publishing sponsored the show, and several members of staff, including myself and staff writer Shaun Bebbington, decamped to Croydon to man our stand. The hall was packed and we were doing a roaring trade selling back issues, subscriptions and T-shirts to the retro congregation. Live made a load of cash but for me the event was all about reaping the rewards of six months of hard graft.

Retro Gamer had launched quietly in January 2004 and now, six issues down the line, there was a massive buzz about it. After a stuttering start, **RG** had begun to find its feet with the quality and balance of content steadily improving with each issue. Shaun had come on board in May and there was no shortage of decent freelancers wanting to write for the mag. Positive feedback from the show suggested that my optimism was well grounded. To top things off, my most admired retro celeb, Matthew Smith, was in attendance, and wearing one of our T-shirts. It was just a gloriously fun and rewarding weekend. And then C64Audio's Chris Abbott quizzed me about my retro credentials. Just who was this person behind this mag, he asked. The question was ever-so-slightly pointed and I was struck by self-doubt. I was hardly an unsung hero. I'd not started my own retro fanzine or website. I said something about being in the right place at the right time and then scarpered. It wasn't the first time as **Retro Gamer** editor that I'd doubted myself. And it wouldn't be the last.

I didn't lie to Chris – the opportunity did land in my lap. The idea for a retro mag was first broached by editorial director Wayne Williams in 2002. At the time I was editing a cheats mag called *TipStation*, having previously worked on Live's PC titles since joining the Cheshire-based publisher as a staff writer in March 2000. Wayne knew I was interested in retro and put my name forward as a potential editor. However, the publisher, Robin Wilkinson, wasn't convinced there was a market for a retro mag and it ended up on the back burner, where it simmered for about 12 months.

"I pitched the idea a couple of times again, each with limited interest, until another launch ideas meeting in 2003," says Wayne. "Live was in a growth stage, so we were launching a few new titles. We were looking for ideas that were easy to produce and could be done without needing additional staff. The more I thought about a retro mag, the more I was convinced it was a winner. The timing seemed right and it was something different, something that Future or Paragon wouldn't even consider, so I really forced it through. I had investigated the retro scene on the internet but there was no guarantee it was something that would work on the newsstand, so we approached it cautiously, with a smallish print run. Advertising was also a potential problem, so we had to look at it as a bonus rather than something needed to break even or make a profit. That's how we arrived at the cover price."

Ah, the thorny issue of the cover price. Initially it was to be £5.49. I told Robin we'd be mad to charge more than a fiver – he took my concerns on board and *raised* the cover price to

"WE HAD NO PLANS TO PRODUCE MORE THAN ONE ISSUE, OR MORE THAN FOUR AT THE ABSOLUTE MAXIMUM, UNTIL WE SAW THE FIRST ISSUE SALES FIGURES. IT WAS MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN ANYONE EXPECTED" WAYNE WILLIAMS, EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

IN THE KNOW



- » **MAGAZINE:** RETRO GAMER MK I
- » **PUBLISHER:** LIVE PUBLISHING
- » **EDITOR:** MARTYN CARROLL
- » **NUMBER OF ISSUES:** 18, PLUS ONE 'ANTHOLOGY'
- » **FIRST ISSUE RELEASED:** JANUARY 2004
- » **LAST ISSUE RELEASED:** JULY 2005
- » **COVER PRICE:** £5.99
- » **PAGINATON:** 100 PAGES (ISSUES 1, 17, 18), 116 PAGES (ISSUES 2-16)
- » **FREQUENCY:** ORIGINALLY QUARTERLY, THEN BI-MONTHLY, THEN MONTHLY, FINALLY FOUR-WEEKLY
- » **EXPECT TO PAY:** £3-5 FOR MOST ISSUES, £10+ FOR THE FIRST ISSUE

» One of the quieter days in the Live office, by the looks of it. Martyn pictured with *PSG* editor Paul Loughrey.

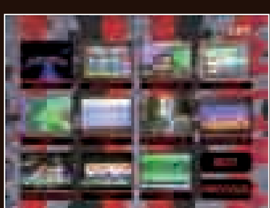


THE MAKING OF... Retro Gamer



CD OR NOT CD?

The coverdiscs slapped to the front of **RG** seemed to split the readership right down the middle, with people either loving or hating them. At Live coverdiscs were a necessary evil – every magazine had one, basically because they helped justify the high cover price despite only costing about 25p to physically produce. They always looked nice – we spent a fair bit of time coming up with each inlay design – but most readers knew that the contents could be downloaded for free (legally or otherwise) from the web. The only disk that really stood out was the one containing the Konix videos, which freelancer Craig Vaughan managed to secure. This stuff had never been seen before so it was great being able to share it with readers. Generally though I hated the disks, because there was no dedicated disk editor and I had to compile them myself, taking up time that I should have been spending on the mag. Hmmph.





» The Mastertronic feature was the very first one to be laid out, and it served as a template for many of the articles in the early issues.

£5.99. His reasoning was that there was no rival in the market, and that potential readers would be blokes in their late twenties, early thirties with a decent job who wouldn't care if the mag cost a quid more than other premium titles. Discussion over. I didn't have time to argue anyway – Wayne gave me the green light at the end of November and the first issue had to be ready before we broke up for Christmas. That gave me three weeks to pull together 100 pages. To make matters worse, I was still editing *TipStation*, as well as two awful children's comics. And just to add to the fun, I was told that there was no freelance budget available. To give him his due, Wayne did ask me if I thought it was possible given the lack of time and money, and I said yes, absolutely. It was beyond stupid, but no amount of sleepless nights were about to stop me editing the UK's first proper retro magazine.

Those three weeks were a bit of a blur, but thankfully I'd already decided what form the magazine would take. I'd been a regular reader of retro fanzines, and loved how enthusiastic, eclectic and free form they were. You didn't know what eye-opening stuff you'd find in each issue. I wanted the magazine to be like a fleshed-out fanzine, packed with features that went deeper than those on the internet. To make this happen, I drew up a content list and went around the office begging people to help out. Aaron Birch, who worked on Live's PC mags, was on the receiving end of much arm bending. He wrote several pieces under various names to make it look like we had a proper team. I also got a couple of old school-chums to contribute articles. Most of my contributions were rewritten articles that I'd had published elsewhere. I managed to secure £300 to pay ex-Live editor John Southern to write the six-page Sinclair piece, and that was all I spent. At some point during this craziness two important decisions were made. First, someone decided that the mag would be called '**Retro Gamer**', and second, a new recruit named Mat Mabe would be the art editor.

Mat joined Live in mid-2003 and made his mark on *Movie Insider* magazine. A lot of Live's magazines were stolid template-based affairs and we knew that this wouldn't work for a features-based mag. "I think my somewhat quirky style was recognised as being ideal for **Retro Gamer**," says Mat. "I was asked to put some concepts together for the cover, and then a little over a week later, issue one was under way."

Mat's chosen cover concept was based on the box art for *Space Invaders* on the Atari 2600. He went on to use this referential style to create the look and feel of **RG**. "The look was really a literal interpretation of the title," he says. "I tried to be as authentic as possible by drawing inspiration from the artwork associated with games from back in the day – screenshots, cover designs, adverts, loading screens and so on. I also looked at Seventies, Eighties and Nineties graphic styles and tried to re-create the general feel of the relevant decades. Looking back I question my initial choice of fonts – they were authentic and striking, but didn't always make for an easy read. The layout was a little cut and paste, but that was intentional and part of the charm."

Issue one went on sale on 15 January 2004. There was no fanfare, but news of its arrival spread quickly across the web. Interest began to snowball and a very respectable 11,922 copies were sold on UK newsstands. Little did they know, but the people who bought that first issue effectively secured **RG**'s existence. "The idea was to just publish the one issue and see how it went," says Wayne, "but in order to get it into Smiths we had to say we were going to make it quarterly. We had no plans to produce more than one issue, or more than four at the absolute maximum, until we saw the first issue sales figures. It was more successful than anyone expected. We had a meeting with Smiths shortly afterwards about various things, but all they were interested in was **RG**. They increased their allocation for issue two and we agreed to go bi-monthly with it."

This was brilliant news. I was freed from the other mags and asked to work on **RG** full time. I knew that the content in issue one was far from perfect so I

» Here's the coin-op that Dave Cusick built for the guide in issue six. This got a lot of play in the office, particularly after deadlines had passed.



» Writer Shaun Bebbington, pictured here using his Commodore setup to extract data from the *Mega-Tree* development disks.



GAMES THAT CHANGED LIVES

NO. 18



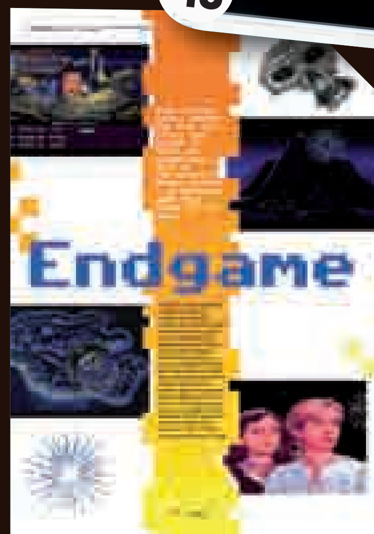
JON HARE (founder of Sensible Software)

Subbuteo

The most important game I ever played was Subbuteo – not on a computer but on a felt pitch, on the carpet. It inspired me to create endless footy games as a child. I'd take the heads of famous people from packs of Shreddies, the soft toys of my childhood, a ping-pong ball and some plastic nets I picked up somewhere. Growing up in a pre-videogames era, this isn't as mad as it sounds.



» The **Retro Gamer** stand at the first Classic Gaming Expo UK. Live Publishing made so much cash from sales that we had trouble stuffing all of the notes into a tiny tin box.



» Endgame was introduced in issue two, making it the longest-running 'regular' to appear in **Retro Gamer**.

was determined to use the additional time to get things right. I was also given an extra 16 pages and a proper freelance budget. Some of this money was used to pay for features from Richard Burton and David Crookes, the first two freelancers to pitch ideas. "**RG** was just there, sitting on a shelf in WH Smith, completely unannounced," says Richard. "After grabbing a copy, I realised that it was exactly the magazine I'd been waiting for. I'd always wanted to write for a games magazine since helping to start *WACCI*, an Amstrad fanzine, in the mid-Eighties, so I sent Martyn an email detailing a few ideas and he liked them."

Richard contributed an article about collecting 8-bit stuff while David interviewed the Oliver twins for a *Dizzy* feature. "As a former contributor to *Amstrad Action* and *Amiga Format*, and a real retro nutcase, I just knew **RG** was something I had to get involved with," he says. "I bashed out an email proposal to write a piece about *Dizzy*. To my surprise, Martyn wrote back and agreed." The Commodore hardware piece was written by Shaun Bebbington. I wanted a Commodore piece to follow the Sinclair article in issue one and Shaun was the obvious man for the job.

Issue two hit the shelves on 26 February. Sales were slightly down on the launch issue, with 10,439 copies sold in the UK. For the first time a number of copies were shipped to the US and Australia, resulting in a further 1,090 copies sold. The biggest surprise, however, was the number of subscribers we had. Shortly after issue two went on sale, 440 people had signed up for a subscription. It took Live's *PC Tools* magazine 15 issues to reach that number.

Issue three was the bestselling issue to date, shifting 14,204 copies in the UK and 2,390 overseas (these figures don't include subscriber copies). Content-wise I felt this was the strongest issue so far, with some well-written features and minimal filler. Better than expected sales convinced Robin and Wayne to increase

"I TRIED TO BE AS AUTHENTIC AS POSSIBLE BY DRAWING INSPIRATION FROM THE ARTWORK ASSOCIATED WITH GAMES FROM BACK IN THE DAY. THE LAYOUT WAS A LITTLE CUT AND PASTE BUT THAT WAS INTENTIONAL" MAT MABE, ART EDITOR

» Old ed Martyn and new ed Darran at the Retro Fusion event in 2006. Note Darran keeping it real by wearing an **RG** T-shirt.



UNDER THE MEGA-TREE

RG received lots of publicity when it acquired the development disks to the never-released third Miner Willy game, *The Mega-Tree*. Richard Burton had been talking to Stuart Fotheringham (who worked on the game alongside Matt Smith and Marc Dawson) about the disks for some time, and it looked like we'd be given first dabs on them. However, Stuart put the disks on eBay with the money raised going to charity. There was a danger the disks would be snapped up by a private collector, so Live gave me £1,000 to bid with and in the end we got them for £207. We then ran a massive 11-page feature in issue five where Richard covered the history of the game and revealed the contents of each disk. "*The Mega-Tree* feature was a high point," says Richard. "I'd been trying to locate the development disks for years, so when Stuart finally rediscovered them, I desperately wanted to get the disks and conclude the *Mega-Tree* story." In the end Richard did get the disks – as payment for his Retro Auction Watch column.





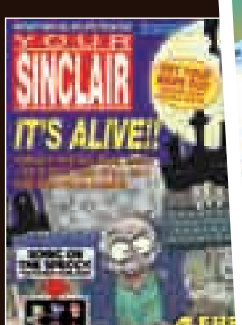
THE MAKING OF... Retro Gamer

MORE SINCLAIR

UK copies of issue nine came with a free 32-page *Your Sinclair* magazine. This was one of Wayne's ideas – he was a longtime reader of the magazine back in the day – but I wasn't really sure about messing around with such a well-respected title, especially as it received such a dignified sendoff back in 1993. Live approached Future (who initially had no idea that it actually owned the title!) and a deal was done where we could create three 'tribute' issues. As I was busy with **Retro Gamer**, Dan Whitehead (who worked on Live's console and movie magazines) put the magazine together, and he did a brilliant job by getting contributions from familiar faces such as Phil South, Matt Bielby, Teresa Maughan and Jonathan Davies. Feedback from the Spectrum community was fantastic, and it definitely didn't tarnish the *Your Sinclair* name as I'd feared it might, but because the tribute had no noticeable effect on sales, plans for the further two issues were scrapped. Which was wazzy.







the frequency again, with **Retro Gamer** going monthly from issue four. To help reduce the growing freelance outlay, I was offered a staff writer. I put Shaun's name forward, as he was keen, knew his stuff and lived nearby in Crewe so wouldn't need to relocate. He was interviewed and offered the job, which he accepted. It seemed like the perfect appointment, but things didn't work out as hoped for either of us.

Before those problems became apparent, we were faced with a more immediate issue. Sales of issue four fell dramatically, down to 8,382 copies in the UK. Issue five rallied slightly (8,940 copies) and issue six higher still (9,994 copies), but it was worryingly obvious that sales had peaked early. By issue nine, UK sales had levelled off around the 8,000 mark and that was probably our core readership. To try to lure back those people who'd bought the early issues, we resorted to sticking the mag in a bag and throwing in some free stuff. First there was an A2 poster featuring game art, then a *Your Sinclair* 'tribute' issue, and finally an Oli Frey wall calendar. None of this had a noticeable effect on sales, so attention turned to the content of the mag.

Wayne had been strictly hands-off when it came to content, but faced with stagnant sales, he proposed some changes. In a bizarre cake-based comparison, he likened **RG** to a stodgy slice of Battenberg cake; it was more difficult to swallow than something like a cream éclair. He suggested that I throw out the ten-page features and replace them with shorter, bite-sized articles. I wasn't about to ditch the in-depth features completely – I felt they were **RG**'s strength, and where the magazine distinguished itself from all the retro content on the web – so we reached a compromise where I introduced a number of lighter articles to improve pacing, flow and digestibility. These new additions would appear in issue 13 in the shape of Back To The Eighties, High Score, Retro Revival, Japan Happy Play Noise and Strange Games.



» Live Publishing celebrated its fifth anniversary in November 2004 with a cheery group picture. This was probably the last time some of these people were seen smiling.

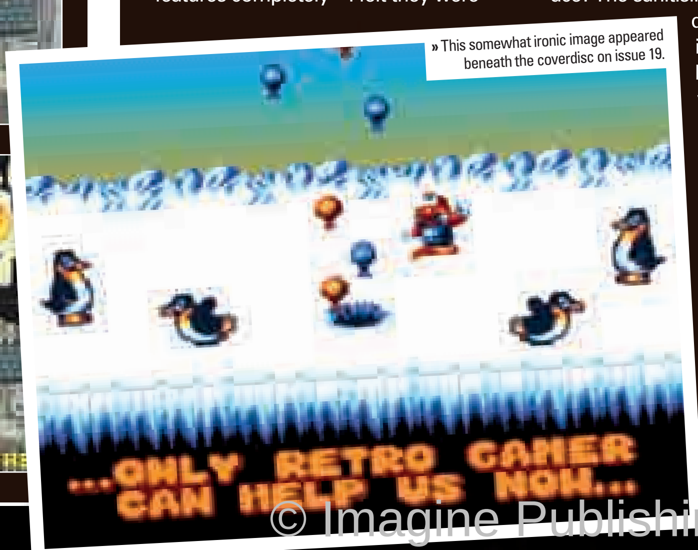
> "TOWARDS THE END OF MY SPELL THE DAYS BROADLY WENT SOMETHING LIKE MORNING SOBER, AFTERNOON PISSED. THERE WAS DEFINITELY A FEELING THAT WE WERE ALL ON A SINKING SHIP"
>
> SHAUN BEBBINGTON, STAFF WRITER

The layout was also updated by a reluctant Mat. Out went the bespoke opening spreads, and many of the more eccentric design elements like skewed columns and the hideous Eighties colours were removed to make way for a more generic appearance. The idea was to create a slick, professional-looking title, but Mat felt that the exact opposite was achieved. "Stripping out the attention to detail made us look *less* professional. There's professional layouts and then there's being so intentionally shit and retro that you're ace! The sanitising of the magazine's design made the intentional shitness look half-arsed, like we'd forgotten what we were all about."

In January 2005 time ran out on Mat's stint as art editor. He announced he was leaving to join Evolution Studios to work on newfangled PlayStation 3 games. He was replaced by in-house designer Craig Chubb who'd designed the earlier *Your Sinclair* supplement. Then Live dropped the bomb with a round of redundancies. PlayStation reviews mag *PSG* was closed and several good friends got the boot. Shaun also found himself in the firing line, although I suspect that came as a bit of a relief as things hadn't really worked out for him. "The biggest problem was that my expectations of writing for an in-house magazine were unrealistic and probably idealistic," he says. "I expected a more creative process, chitchat about what's going into the current issue, how to best present it and so on, but there was none of this. I didn't expect to have to write an eight-page feature for every issue. That was way out of my comfort zone. I felt like I couldn't compete with the freelancers. Towards the end of my spell the days broadly went something like morning sober, afternoon pissed. There was definitely a feeling that we were all on a sinking ship."

Sales of **RG** were enough to make us all want to drown ourselves – or at least our sorrows. We had high hopes for the new look issue 13 but it sold an irksome 7,611 copies in the UK, and issue 14 plummeted further with UK sales of just 5,144. Eek. Following Shaun's departure, Aaron Birch was poached from the PC mags as deputy editor and the pair of us soldiered on, but sales barely lifted above the 6,000 mark. To reduce costs, the pagination of issue 17 was dropped to 100 pages and there was talk about returning to a bi-monthly schedule. **RG** was in trouble and, as we'd soon discover, so was Live.

If I left the first Classic Gaming Expo with feelings of self-doubt, I approached the second show in August 2005 with



» This somewhat ironic image appeared beneath the coverdisc on issue 19.

GAMES THAT CHANGED LIVES

NO. 19



MARK JONES

(former Ocean Software graphic designer)

Tir Na Nog (Spectrum)

Tir Na Nog seemed to create a whole new world in a measly 48K of memory. I remember seeing the first screenshots in *Crash* and was gobsmacked at the graphics. *Crash* referred to it as a computer movie and I was itching to see it running. When it was released I wasn't disappointed. It looked like nothing else released up until then. I was 14 at the time. I wasn't in my bedroom playing a computer game, I was there!



» Two of the new regular features introduced in issue 13. One of these proved more popular than the other.



» The reader top 100 was based on over a thousand submitted reader feedback surveys. *Elite* was chosen as the number one game.

downright dread. Freelancers hadn't been paid for work stretching back months and I feared they'd be waiting for me, pitchforks in hand. Those I did meet were surprisingly civil and I'd like to thank them for that; there was no way I'd have continued to commission work if I'd known Live couldn't pay for it. Live didn't have enough cash to print the finished issue 19, so the pages just sat there, waiting to be uploaded. And shortly after returning from the expo, Robin told Aaron and myself to clear our desks. Live was bankrupt and the receivers had been called in.

In the end there were no winners. Subscribers lost out on issues they'd paid for, the freelancers went hungry and the staff were out of a job. Even Robin and Wayne ended up shouldering large debts due to bank loan guarantees. The only good came in October 2005, when Imagine Publishing announced that it had acquired the magazine from the receivers.

RG Mk I may have ended badly and left an unpleasant taste in the mouths of many, but for the key contributors the experience was one they're unlikely to forget. "Writing for those early issues was wonderful," says Paul Drury, who had his first Desert Island Disks piece printed in issue five and has contributed something to every issue since. "It wasn't just the pride of seeing your work in print or getting to meet heroes of mine, like Keith Campbell, Archer and Matt Smith. It was this feeling that you were part of something new. That sounds odd when we were scribbling about old games and machines, but it was like our time had finally come and we could have a magazine dedicated to this thing we were passionate about. It was only when it folded that I realised how much it meant to me."

"The Live Publishing collapse wasn't pleasant but sadly these things happen," remembers Richard Burton, another long time contributor. "I loved every minute of it, still do in fact. **RG** caused such a buzz it was great to be part of it."

"**Retro Gamer** changed my life," says David Crookes. "It not only indulged my retro passion and allowed me to write about stuff I cared about but I learned so much along the way. Without **RG** I doubt I would have carved out a freelance career in videogame journalism and for that I'm eternally grateful."

"My overall **RG** experience was a great one," says Aaron Birch. "At Live things were more POW camp than office space, and deadlines were tighter than a whale's backside, but with **RG** we created something unique – a magazine that was more a community than a one-sided read. Riding a rollercoaster best sums up working on **RG** – a journey with many ups, and the now infamous downs, but a thrilling journey all the same."

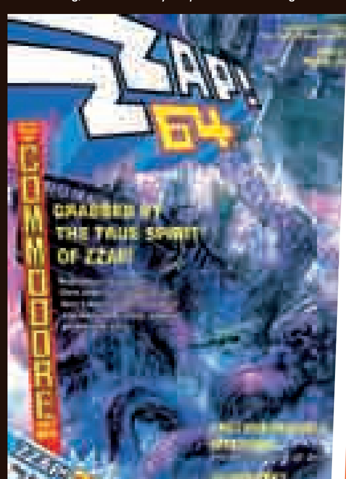
And finally, art editor Mat Mabe: "I'm still very proud of **RG** and how it looked. Having creative control over a magazine that was our own was a real privilege. I loved the camaraderie and getting the mag back from the printer was always a good feeling. The worst thing was the pressure of working in Live's frustrating environment – too few staff, too short deadlines and no project management. But I learned a lot and I was really proud to say I was art editor on **Retro Gamer** when people asked what I did."

I find it difficult to reflect on my time as editor, probably because I was so entrenched in the whole thing. I'd not looked back at the old issues since Live fizzled out but it's been fun reading them again – I can't quite believe some of the rubbish I wrote back then. But I got one thing right. In my intro to the first issue I said, "You're holding in your hands the start of something very special." That was bang on. Here's to issue 50. Here's to the next 50. Here's to **Retro Gamer**.

RETRO HATERZ

Early reader feedback was generally very good, but not everyone was happy with us, particularly outside the Live Publishing forum. I remember Wayne coming to me after he'd Googled for feedback. "Not many people like us," he said. "In fact, everyone hates us!" Snipers were taking aim and I felt like cowering under my desk. Various accusations were flying around. One person, who's known to **RG** readers, but shall remain nameless, said online that I'd taken a number of his very obvious feature ideas and commissioned them to other people. His actions almost had dire consequences, as Wayne wanted me to stop accepting feature ideas on spec as a precautionary measure. I rarely commissioned anything, preferring to rely on submitted pitches, so this would have really messed things up. Thankfully it was never imposed.

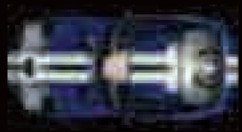
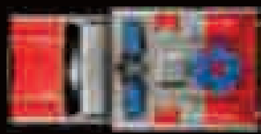
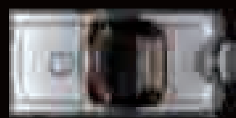
» Copies of issue 18 in WH Smiths came with a *Zzap!64* tribute mag, edited with by *Zzap* fan Rob de Voogd.



» One of the decisions made during the redesign was to devote more space to reviews and feature bigger screenshots, as seen in this *Sonic* spread.




The history of
grand
theft
auto



GAMES THAT CHANGED LIVES

LEE KIRTON

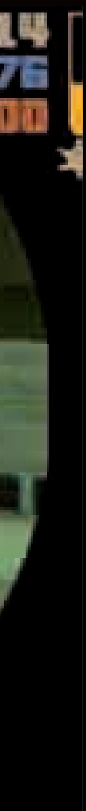
(press guru for Atari)

GoldenEye (N64)

I started in the games industry when I was 19 and I'm now nearly 31 and this game just amazed me. I couldn't believe that a game could look and play as well as it did. It was the first time I'd played a real console FPS and it was probably the best developed game ever!

NO. 20

FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS, GRAND THEFT AUTO WOULD SEGUE FROM CONTROVERSIAL VIDEOGAME TO NOTORIOUS MEDIA BRAND. **STUART HUNT** BRAVES LIBERTY CITY AND SPEAKS TO THE PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR ONE OF VIDEOGAMING'S MOST POPULAR FRANCHISES




We currently find ourselves on the cusp of a brand new appendage to the *Grand Theft Auto* series. A release that will find fans returning to a very special place. Liberty City is a virtual homage to the bustling streets of New York and is unarguably the most infamous metropolis of any videogame to date. It's become as iconic to the series as the freedom, the carjacking and the infectious wrongdoing, and for many it marks the very first time they ever came to experience an 'open world' environment in a videogame.

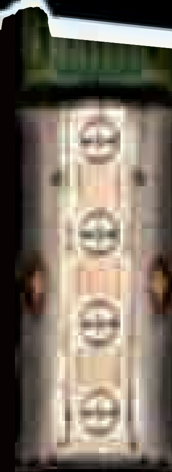
The person responsible for designing and building Liberty City was Peter Farley. Ironically, his background wasn't in programming or videogames – although he admits to being brought up on a staple diet of ZX81 and Spectrum – but in architecture. Working for a small architecture firm after finishing the first year of his degree, Peter came to realise that a career in construction really wasn't for him, and decided to answer a job advertisement, posted by DMA, who at that time were looking to expand and hire a new team of level designers.

"I had no real idea what a level designer was but I'd always loved videogames. The interview process was spread over two days and I remember thinking at the time that it was one of the most challenging things I'd ever been faced with," admits Peter. "On the second day I was sat down in front of a puzzle game that they had in development and was tasked to build a fully working puzzle in 30 minutes. I was left alone to sweat it out. I don't think the puzzle even worked. But they must have seen something, because I got the job."

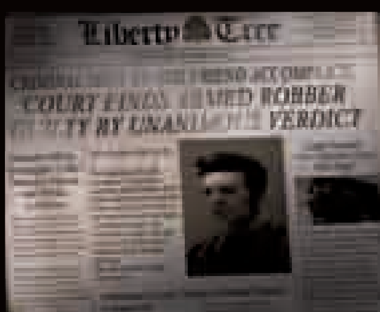
At the time that Peter joined DMA, the company would be divided while it worked on two very different projects: *Body Harvest*, a planned launch title for the Nintendo 64, and another, slightly less highbrow game for the PC. *Body Harvest* was DMA's flagship project, and Peter remembers vividly the interest which the game generated among the new recruits.

"There were four level designers that started at the same time as me. I remember being shown around on that first day. We were going to be split up based on the needs of two new projects that had just been started and we all wanted to work on *Body Harvest*. It was just so damn sexy, all those 3D graphics, the N64 development kits and Silicon Graphics workstations sat around – it was like mission control at NASA," explains Peter. "Anyway, as it worked out, neither of us got to work on the *Body Harvest* project, our skills would be put to use on a rather drab-looking top-down racer which at that point had the working title '*Race 'N' Chase*'."

'*Race 'N' Chase*' is where the genesis of *Grand Theft Auto* can be found. Mike Dailly, who at the time was lead programmer at DMA, had been working on a code that would produce isometric cityscapes. Viewed from an aerial camera that the player could intuitively manipulate, and coined Rotation, this engine would become the first *Grand Theft Auto* prototype. However, fate would intervene when Bullfrog released *Syndicate Wars*, and after spotting its glum Orwellian *Blade Runner*-style skyscrapers, Mike knew that his engine looked just too similar and decided to rework







The world of *GTA III* is so well fleshed out; it even has its very own tabloid rag.







The history of Grand Theft Auto



"If you strip it down, Grand Theft Auto III can be seen as a brilliant hybrid of two earlier DMA games: Body Harvest and the original GTA"

A-Z





A is for APB – The classic top-down cops and robbers racer by Tengen shares a few similarities to the original *GTA*.

B is for Body Harvest – DMA's classic N64 game was doing the open-ended, free-roaming, vehicle-borrowing genre long before *GTA III* arrived on the scene.

C is for Cops – What would *GTA* be without the cops? Nothing, that's what. It would be like *Pac-Man* without Blinky, Inky and Clyde!

D is for Dodo – Like the highly elusive bird, the biplane in *GTA III* is hard to come by.

E is for ESRB – The Entertainment Software Rating Board regulates the content of all videogames and recently put a ban on the release of *Manhunt 2*.

F is for Fido – Is the pet name given to the tight-lipped protagonist in *GTA III*. He's also referred to as Kid, and Claude.

G is for Gouranga – Kill a whole group of Hare Krishnas in *GTA* and 'Gouranga' pops up on screen. It means 'golden-limbed'.

H is for Head Radio – The infamous radio station that first made its appearance in *GTA*.

I is for Ice Cream Truck – The vanilla vehicle in *GTA III* played a controversial part in a mission involving blowing up pedestrians.

J is for Joyride – Essentially what you do when you tire of *Grand Theft Auto*'s missions and go for a drive.

K is for Kill Frenzy – This controversial section of *GTA* allowed you to amass cash for killing sprees.

L is for Liberty Tree – The fictional online and in-game newspaper chronicling the history of Liberty City.

M is for Menace – *Menace* was the name of Dave Jones' first game – a side-scrolling shooter that was inspired by his love for *R-Type* and *Nemesis*.

N is for Niko – Hailing from Eastern Europe, Niko Bellic is the name of the protagonist in *Grand Theft Auto IV*.

O is for Offensive – Despite winning rave reviews in numerous gaming mags, the *GTA* series has been continuously dogged by claims, mainly from the *Daily Mail*, that it's offensive and encourages violence.

P is for Popping Heads – Although not a function found in the manual of *GTA III*, using the 'Nasty Limbs' cheat, PS2 owners could blow the heads off pedestrians.

Q is for Quality Control – Owing to the freedom in the game, *GTA* proved difficult to test for bugs.

R is for Race 'N' Chase – This was the original name of *GTA* before it was pitched and bought by BMG.

S is for Spank – It's a shame this whimsical drug doesn't really exist. Dealing in spank would kill a drug lord's credibility quicker than a Primark suit.

T is for Tank – Ruffle enough feathers and the Army roll in with their tanks.

U is for Uzi – The drive-by weapon was first introduced in *GTA III*.

V is for Vice City – The Miami-themed second city of *GTA* is widely regarded as the best in the series.

W is for Weather Effects – *GTA III* wasn't the first, but it did have day/night cycles and various weather effects.

X is for X-Rated Action – A controversial feature in *Grand Theft Auto III* allowed you to pick up ladies of the night and raise your energy level up to 125%.

Y is for Yakuza – Of the many contesting gangs that populate the streets of *GTA*, the Yakuza are the most 'impeccably dressed'.

Z is for Zaibatsu Corp – The fictional pharmaceutical company that run things in *GTA 2*. It means conglomerate in Japan.



Combat has always been a little woolly in *GTA*. It's something that Rockstar is looking to remedy in *GTA IV*.

TH

NOLAN BUSHNELL
(founder of Atari)



NO. 21

Space War (PDP-1)

I played this game in college and it clearly got under my skin and really started the ball rolling to what later became Atari. It was a great game, fun, challenging, but only playable on a very expensive computer late at night and the wee hours of the morning. In my opinion, it was a very important step.

it. Oddly, it was after seeing the Sega Saturn game *Clockwork Knight* that Mike considered switching the engine to a side-on perspective, but after a conversation with a colleague, he decided to set his sights a little higher.

"I was speaking to John Whyte (who at the time was working on *Body Harvest* for the N64), and he'd been trying to get an overhead racing game past Dave Jones [DMA's founder] for a while. Dave, however, wasn't interested," explains Mike. "It then occurred to me that although I had a side-on engine, all I needed to do was add a floor and it would easily become an overhead engine. I set about using the previous *GTA* prototype as a base. Using cubes, I built an array of perspective points then, with a simple 3D array, attached faces to each active cube. I removed interior faces (since they couldn't be seen) and rendered the resulting city. Looking at it, they decided to restart *Race 'N' Chase*, but using the new engine since it would allow far more freedom and a true perspective. *GTA* was a real team effort, and had input from every team member, this was how it all started. It shows how important true R&D is, without it several DMA games would have never been started."



This is the first in-game screen you'll experience in *Grand Theft Auto*.

The parallax movement of the buildings, and the way in which the camera would lock on to your car and pull away the faster it travelled led to the possibility of creating an overhead police chase/action game. And so Mike's overhead city engine was used as the backdrop.

When Peter was assigned to the *Race 'N' Chase* project he was keen to utilise his knowledge of architecture, and set about plotting each map on a piece of paper. This was how all of the cities inside *Grand Theft Auto* would begin – as 2D maps of roads, sidewalks and buildings – and once complete, using a map-editing tool, they would be translated into the vibrant and detailed 3D cities that we can see in the game.

It's a well-known fact that the three game maps – Liberty City, Vice City and San Andreas – were based on the cities of New York, Miami and San Francisco respectively. They also contained subtle nods to well-known areas of each city. For example, Liberty City's sections included Park (Central Park), New Guernsey (New Jersey) and Brocklyn (Brooklyn).

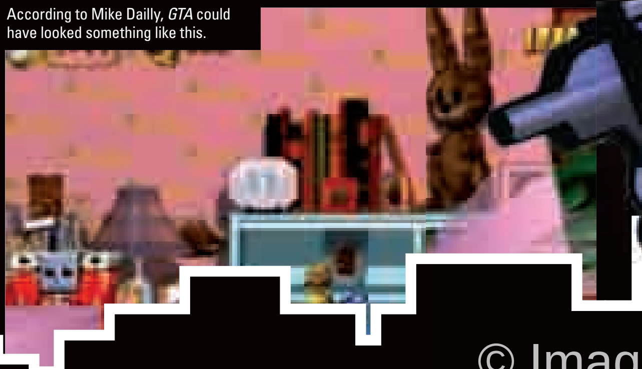
The first hurdle that the team had to overcome was getting to grips with the mapping tools. None of the team had any experience of using map editors, and while the tool chain at DMA was very well instigated, it would take a lot of time for the new team to learn all the different techniques that were available. Also, the team would find that they had no way of viewing the city in three dimensions until they ran it in the actual game.

"Personally, it was a pretty smooth transition to go from designing individual buildings to then designing a whole city. The design criterion is different. For the game, you were designing form and function to support gameplay, rather than in real life where you design a building to support an activity or movement. But the actual process was remarkably similar," explains Peter.

Given the theme and subject of *Grand Theft Auto*, you'd expect the team to be governed by a strict list of rules and the missions to be pencilled in before development began to help ensure its safe passage through the censors. But Peter confesses that working on *GTA* was quite a liberating experience.

"The working brief was non-existent other than some guidance from the head of art," recalls Peter. "Most of us had no experience at all and were making it up as we went along. I think that spirit of adventure and freedom is conveyed in the final game and went a long way to helping to define many of the design decisions. In terms of the look and feel of the city the level designers worked closely with the artists to create locations and a style for each of the cities. Once a set of tiles had been completed it was then the level designer's job to use them like Lego blocks to create the city. I think the art team was always quite amazed and sometimes horrified at the manner in which we creatively used their tiles to create new textures and forms."

Grand Theft Auto is a brilliant juxtaposition of a dour and depressing world, but painted with vibrancy and colour. It certainly feels the most chipper of the series, as it holds this brilliant sense of irreverence and fun throughout its missions. The way your character would comically hop over the bonnets of cars and pepper those poor Hare Krishnas all over the road



According to Mike Dailly, *GTA* could have looked something like this.



The history of grand theft auto

as they tried to cross in front of you was just so strangely enjoyable. The realism and popular culture references of the later games have all but drowned out those jubilant audience cheers and squeaky voices that pumped from those blue phone boxes.

"When we started the game it used 8-bit graphics and the palette was much darker and more realistic than the final release. At this stage PC technology was moving at a really fast rate and with the game taking a while to finish anyway, the decision was made to switch to 32-bit graphics, giving us a much wider palette. I think the whole art department at DMA spent the next two weeks redrawing the game tiles and sprites. The result was a much brighter and more colourful game, which in the long run helped reduce some of the impact of the adult nature of the game," explains Peter.

Liberty City took four to five months to design and build, and the mission design and scripting would take a further six months. Over the course of its development the core team would change, other departments would be drafted in to assist, and at one point DMA's entire art department were put to work on the game.

The original *Race 'N' Chase* design was the one that DMA pitched to BMG. And it wasn't until after the publisher was on board that the name would later be changed to *Grand Theft Auto*. As the game presented the player with so much choice, checking for bugs and glitches proved to be very difficult and the game's development would stretch from 15 to 30 months. Its 'open world' environment lacked constraints, allowing for plenty of different routes and ways to complete its missions. And each needed to be played through to its completion because, as was the nature of the engine, every new element that was added could potentially affect another.



Under Rockstar, *GTA*'s boxart has taken on a unique style all of its own.

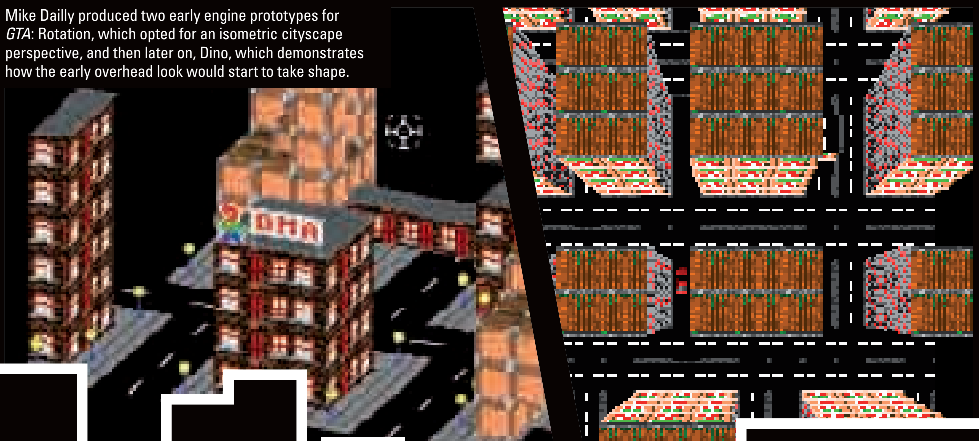
"It's kind of hard to overrun when you don't have a schedule, but we were aware that *GTA*, like all the other projects DMA had then, was taking too long. I think the publisher was more concerned than us though," Peter says. "Most team members worked extra hours because we were all so excited by what we were creating. There was this energy and feeling about the place that what we were working on was really special and that it really mattered. At DMA there was this mentality that a game wasn't finished until they were happy with it. Very few developers are ever in that position so it was refreshing, and ultimately led to some great innovative games. It also led to some turkeys that should have been canned after six months but weren't."

Grand Theft Auto debuted on the PC in 1997. Initially developed in DOS, it would later be ported to Windows, PlayStation and it even found an admittedly poor, but technically impressive, Game Boy Color conversion. There were also rumoured to be Nintendo 64 and Saturn conversions in the works, which would have been refined ports of the PlayStation port, but sadly they never found a release.

What really helped to set *Grand Theft Auto* apart from other games of the time was its sense of freedom (hence the name Liberty City), as fun could be found by simply deviating from the missions and exploring the game's colourful environments.

The game was well received by many in the gaming press, garnering rave reviews and even a Gold Award in *PC Format*. However, the tabloids, most notably the *Daily Mail*, would criticise *Grand Theft Auto* for its violent themes, which many people felt it was trying to glamorise.

"I think one of the reasons *GTA* was so well received was the amount of detail – it showed the love and attention that had been heaped on the game by the people making it," says Peter. "Team members would always come up with new ideas like the tank or the rocket launcher and they would just get added into the mix and no one ever said no, or that something couldn't be done! There are a few things looking back that could have been better – the road layout was trying to map too closely to New

Mike Dailly produced two early engine prototypes for *GTA*: Rotation, which opted for an isometric cityscape perspective, and then later on, Dino, which demonstrates how the early overhead look would start to take shape.


Attack of the GTA clones

It's one of the fattest cash cows in videogame history. We take a look at some of the most promising tugs on its milkies…



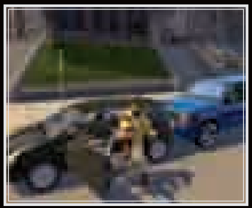
THE SIMSPONS: HIT & RUN
Released: 2003
Systems: Xbox, PS2, GC, PC
Proving that omitting the word Bart from any *Simpsons* game will immediately guarantee it safe passage through a hall of suck, this follow-up to *The Simpsons: Road Rage* allowed you to cause chaos on the animated streets of Springfield. Leaving aside Konami's awesome arcade game, this is one of the best titles that the mustard faces have put their faces, too. So it should come as no surprise that it's also one of the better *Grand Theft Auto* clones out there.



TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA
Released: 2003
Systems: PS2, Xbox, PC, Mac
Taking the award for the most humdrum title ever, you'd have thought that the first *GTA* clone that allowed you to play a martial arts cop would exist somewhere in the realms of high octane. It wasn't a bad effort – the game faithfully rendered 240 square miles of LA, a branching storyline and it incorporated a good cop/bad cop element that gained you points according to your actions – but it suffered the *GTA* hype bug, and we soon clambered back into a cab heading for Liberty City.



DRIV3R
Released: 2004
Systems: Xbox, PS2, GBA, PC
You have to feel for Tanner. His first appearance on the PSone caused quite a stir, his second was a competent follow-up that allowed him to explore the streets of Rio. Then, for his third mission, he turned into a goon with the ability to walk through concrete walls and re-emerge on rooftops unscathed. Reflections' promising franchise was seriously marred by this glitch-laden game, that was further spoiled by pad-tossing enemy AI. Easily the worst *GTA* clone there is.



SAINTS ROW
Released: 2006
Systems: Xbox 360
THQ's version of *GTA: San Andreas* is not without its charms. Straight off the bat you're given the chance to create your own character to control in the game. It also includes some rather innovative features. You could fraudulently claim insurance by throwing yourself in front of oncoming traffic, and also satisfyingly launch hapless drivers into your front windscreen by forcing them to play a game of motorway chicken.

GAMES THAT CHANGED OUR LIVES



NO. 22

MIKE DAILLY (inspiration behind Lemmings, Grand Theft Auto and first employee at DMA Design)

Super Mario World (SNES)

Super Mario World on the SNES held my interest for a whole year. I played it, finished it, and then played it again and again. No other game can claim that. But on its own, that's not enough – the series as a whole has delivered consistently for over 20 years; simply amazing! Best game(s) ever!

Roadblocks would prove a real stumbling block in *GTA*, lucky then that man invented tanks.



Seriously lame.

York and without diagonal road tiles the area around the park ended up being not much fun to drive around. Also, some of the missions were left over from the very start of the development process and perhaps weren't as well thought out as some of the later ones. But I guess for virtually everyone on the team it was a learning process and, despite all our mistakes, people loved the game, warts and all."

After the release of *GTA*, BMG was bought by Gremlin Interactive. It was under Gremlin that DMA released two expansion packs for the PC. *GTA: London 1969* and *London 1961* were *Life On Mars*-style mission packs that set the series on the streets of London in the swinging Sixties. These expansion packs would help DMA gauge the demand for a full *GTA* sequel and help to keep the franchise fresh in the minds of gamers.

> "The London expansion packs would help DMA gauge the demand for a full GTA sequel"

Colin MacDonald was the producer and project manager for *Grand Theft Auto 2*, and joined the company shortly after the acquisition by Gremlin. Colin first got into games by purchasing a SAM Coupé home computer. Its relatively small installed base meant that there was very little software available for the machine, and what would begin as a hobby for Colin – writing software for the machine – soon grew into a small development and publishing company. This would lead him to handling some big licences, including *Lemmings*, and it would be this *Lemmings* link that would eventually lead Colin to join DMA as a producer and take on the reigns of *GTA 2*.

"We had a very good idea of what everybody had fun doing in the original, so we didn't mess with that. And in essence, every *GTA* game ever since has taken the same approach," says Colin. "But we added a lot of game functionality to try to enhance the *GTA* experience. We also gambled with moving away from the contemporary setting of the first game, and opinion has been split ever since on the particular pros and cons of that decision."

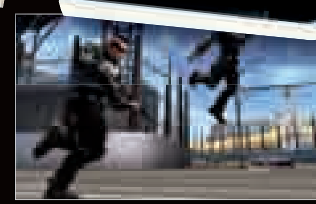
For the sequel it was decided that the setting would move 'X years into the future' and the missions, rather than bleating from the hearing end of a telephone or the buzzing of a pager, would come from the mouths of warring gangs that populated the game's three cities. You had the pristinely attired Yakuza, the twitchy Loonies, the Russian Mafia and the Rednecks, among others, and each was given a detailed backstory that fleshed out their world brilliantly. This idea of basing *GTA* around the criminal activities of contesting gangs has since become a mainstay in the franchise, although from *GTA III* onwards it's been used to help fuel the game's narrative rather than its individual missions.

It was agreed that the underlying engine for *GTA 2* would remain similar to the DMA one – which Colin admits had gone through a few changes – but the engine was completely rewritten to make the cars look more solid and realistic against their shiny, futuristic setting. They would be first drawn and mapped in 3D before being transformed into the 2D forms that we saw in the game.

"Because we could see from the first game what worked and what didn't, we were in the fortunate position of being able to plan fairly effectively, so there weren't many drastic changes that occurred throughout the development. The *GTA 2* pills scattered around the cities for collection is the only major feature that I can think of that wasn't planned from the very start," recalls Colin.

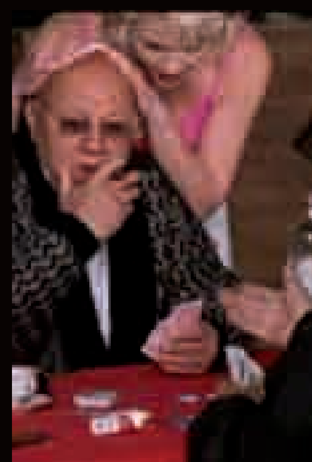
Grand Theft Auto 2 was released in 1999, and would debut on both the PC and PlayStation. It was later ported to the Dreamcast and also received a shamefully laggy Game Boy Color port a year later. Shortly after the release of *GTA 2*, Gremlin was bought by Infogrames, and shortly after Dave Jones decided to leave the company to join Rage Software. DMA was later sold to Take-Two where it was renamed Rockstar North; a move that would change the face of the *Grand Theft Auto* franchise forever.

Grand Theft Auto III was released in October 2001 and debuted on the PlayStation 2. Rockstar's decision to set the game back in Liberty City was a smart move as it would send out a clear message that its intention was to pull the game apart and rebuild it from scratch. The biting satire, glum urban setting and tangible sense of freedom would tilt the videogame industry on its axis.

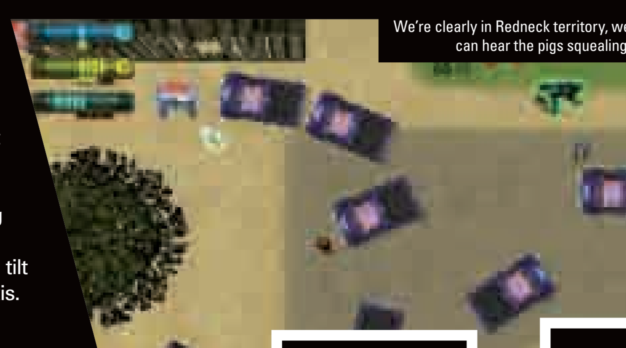


In a Realtime World

After leaving DMA in 1999, and working on the PC shooter *Mobile Forces* for Rage Software, Dave Jones enlisted the help of his old DMA comrades, Mike Dailly and Colin MacDonald to launch Realtime Worlds. Its first game, released exclusively for the Xbox 360, was *Crackdown*. It took a slightly different slant to the crime-infected cities of *GTA* by allowing players to play a genetically modified law man. Your job was to cleanse the streets of ammo-toting punks by clambering up a well-fortified criminal hierarchy and bringing down the main players. Incorporating a solid driving physic – where you could control your vehicle in midair – and superhuman levelling up that allowed you to free run and scale buildings like the Incredible Hulk. *Crackdown* muddied the sandbox genre brilliantly.



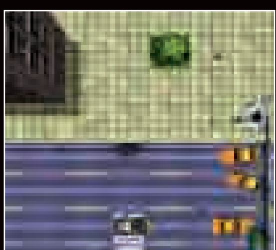
We're clearly in Redneck territory, we can hear the pigs squealing.



The history of Grand Theft Auto

The whistle-stop tour of GTA

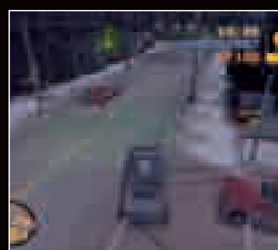
GRAND THEFT AUTO
With over 6,000km of road, a unique zooming overhead camera and an open-ended mission structure, *GTA* allowed us to play out our own classic car chases through the streets of America. There were dozens of varied vehicles to commandeer, tons of humour and plenty of different types of missions to work though. And there was also the chance to compete in head-to-head four-player network games.



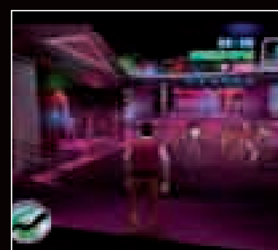
GRAND THEFT AUTO 2
A well hackneyed futuristic setting would prove the backdrop this time out. Set in the future, your character wakes from a cryogenic slumber greeted by a world ruled by a powerful conglomerate and torn apart by gang warfare. This would play an integral part in the *GTA 2* mechanic as you'd have to affiliate yourself with each gang, run missions for them and balance out your loyalty to work your way up through its ranks.



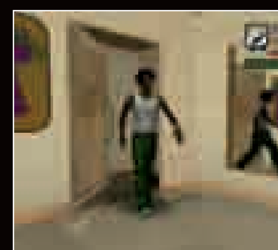
GRAND THEFT AUTO III: LIBERTY CITY
Rockstar's perennial sandbox classic would light a fire in the series. Not since *Mario 64* had a switch from 2D to 3D proved to be such a brilliant move. 3D did two things: fleshed the game out, and made the violence more unflinching. Shifting the perspective to street level allowed gamers to experience an iconic sin city peppered with interaction and nods to popular cinema and iconography.



GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY
A Miami clone was the setting, the Eighties the epoch. Ray Liotta lent his name to its protagonist, and the story borrowed heavily from *Scarface*. It brought swimming and speedboats to *GTA*, and also offered the chance to use money earned in the game to purchase property. The soundtrack too, with its Eighties pop ballads, is one of the greatest videogame soundtracks of all time.



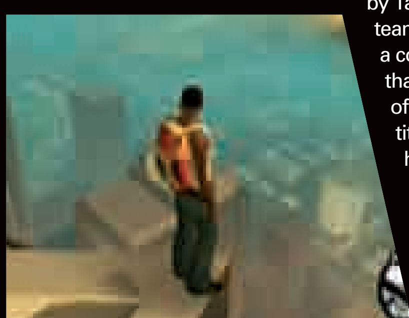
GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS
Epic, huge, gargantuan, three words to describe *San Andreas*. Mini-games, going to the gym, dating – if there was one thing you wanted to do in a game it's likely that *San Andreas* included it. It offered escapism, but the number of functions proved too intimidating for some. Put off by the size, and with many of the missions feeling familiar, this last iteration splits opinion among fans.

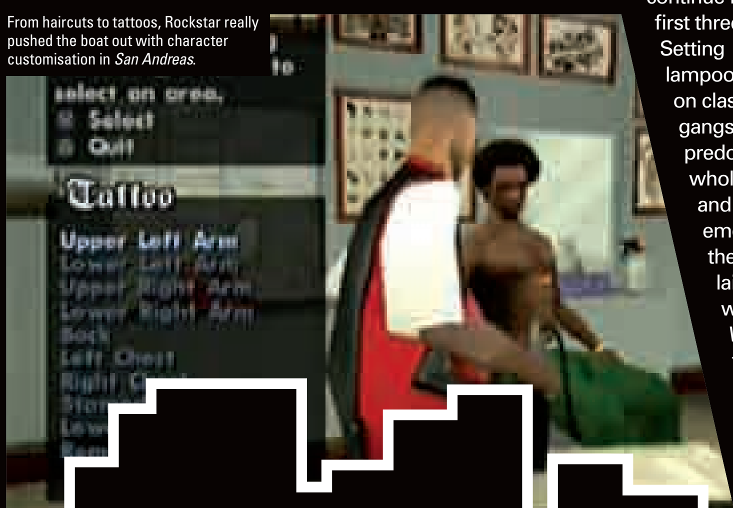


Harvesting the seed

Grand Theft Auto III might have popularised the 3D free-roaming genre, but DMA damn near invented it. After a tumultuous delay and stop/start development, as a result of Nintendo wanting to rejig the game to make it appeal more towards the Japanese market, *Body Harvest* eventually found a very late N64 release after it was picked up by Midway. While it did receive some positive reviews, *Body Harvest* was criticised for its vulgar looks and untidy gameplay, which some gamers found a little too confusing. However, you can't deny the scope of the game. Playing a cybernetic soldier, it was your mission to tackle a race of time-travelling alien insects that were harvesting human bodies from Earth. With its third-person perspective, unique ability to roam its four vast worlds in stolen cars, tanks, boats and planes, and even the moral dilemma of whether to save or mow down civilians in the game, *Body Harvest* can be considered the precursor to Rockstar's 3D vision of the carjacking classic.

If you strip it down, *Grand Theft Auto III* can really be seen as a brilliant hybrid of two earlier DMA games: *Body Harvest* and the original *Grand Theft Auto*. It's likely that when it was bought by Take-Two, the DMA team would have been a collective troupe that had experience of working on both titles, a team that had expertise in 3D sandbox gaming and a vast knowledge and experience of the *Grand Theft Auto* licence.





From haircuts to tattoos, Rockstar really pushed the boat out with character customisation in *San Andreas*.

Grand Theft Auto III was praised for the technical ground that it broke. Realistic weather effects and full night and day cycles helped lay down the foundation of what we now consider the 3D open-world template, or '*GTA*-clone', as it's candidly known as now. The game became a global phenomenon almost overnight, and has retained its prestige ever since.

The series' weird adoration for the Game Boy would end in 2004 with *Grand Theft Auto Advance*. This Game Boy Advance exclusive, developed by Digital Eclipse, was originally promoted as a top-down port of the *GTA III* that appeared on the PS2. But, probably owing to a large technical chasm, the idea was dropped and instead the game was set one year prior to the events of that game. This would mark the first and only time that a *GTA* game was not developed by an affiliation of DMA.

For the highly anticipated sequel, *Vice City* – which many consider to be the pinnacle of the franchise – Rockstar would continue its geographical trend and return to the second of the first three maps, but would add a brilliant twist: the Eighties. Setting *Vice City* in the Eighties allowed Rockstar to inject lampoon into the game and base its characters and missions on classic iconic Eighties cinema. Elements from classic gangster epics, such as *Carlito's Way*, *Goodfellas* and, more predominately, *Scarface*, for its rags-to-riches story, were wholesaled over. And through its loud wardrobes, angular and colourful cars and radio stations, which blasted out emotive rock ballads, *Vice City* would recapture brilliantly the humour and irreverence of that first game. If *GTA III* laid down the template that future games in the series would look to adopt, then, like all good cinema sequels, *Vice City* would lavish itself in its own success, a feeling that seemed to suit its affluent and ornate setting perfectly. And through its property buying

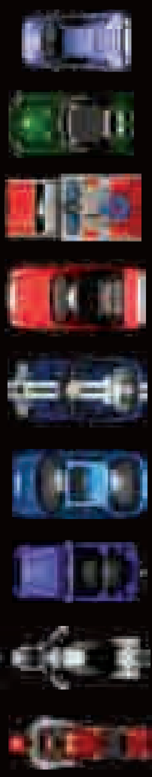
GAMES LIVES



CHUCK SOMMERVILLE
(creator of Chip's Challenge)
Boulder Dash (Commodore 64)
Boulder Dash was the main inspiration for Chip's Challenge, which is the game I am most proud of. But I will give honourable mention to the original text version of Star Trek, because it showed what computer gaming could be.

NO. 23

Rouges Gallery: The Cars of Liberty City



Counthash
A speed demon that looks and purrs like a Lamborghini Countach.

Penetrator
Old-school motor that looks like it's been lifted off the set of *The Untouchables*.

Ambulance
Mow down an innocent bystander and it won't be long before one of these turn up.

Itali
A nippy Italian sports car… but with an open top. Be careful where you park.

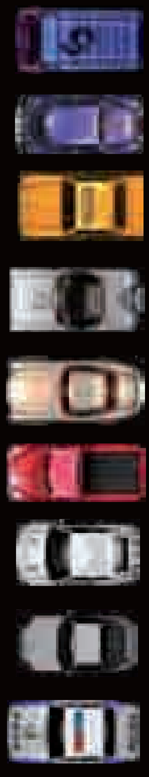
Beast GTS
A muscle car that's both strong and fast – the perfect instrument for ploughing into roadblocks.

Mundano
A mundane little motor. A family car, economic on fuel.

4x4
A surprisingly agile vehicle that's reasonably strong, too.

Bike
The bikes are skittish, but perfect for escaping the cops.

Superbike
Super fast and super vulnerable, not the safest vehicles in the game.



TV Van
Strong and sturdy, and perfect for crashing a gunfight

Bug
In here to make up the numbers – also comes in the ugliest of colours.

Taxi
Sadly it wasn't until *GTA III* that taxi missions were first introduced.

Impaler
Gangster-mobile, complete with leather seats, fluffy dice and, er… four wheels.

Jugular
A play on the Jaguar, despite looking suspiciously like James Bond's Aston Martin DB5.

Pickup
A strong vehicle, ideal for picking stuff up.

Cossie
A speedy little motor, that looks very similar to a Peugeot 306.

Bulldog
The first car you come across in *GTA* proves to be a good all-rounder.

Squad Car
Don't try to enter one of these if there's a cop sat inside otherwise it's off to the slammer you go.



Repair Van
The Repair Van, as you might expect, is a pretty solid vehicle.

Stinger
Very fast, and looks remarkably similar to the Hoff's Pontiac Trans Am. Responds well and glues to the road.

Portsmouth
The only car to be named after a city, and it's a little sluggish to be fair.

Regal
Basically, a skinny Portsmouth, but again, one of the less appealing cars in the game.

Coach
Steal a coach and the police get mad – it does host a brilliant *Speed*-parody mission though.

Limousine
Parking can be a nightmare, and it's hardly the most inconspicuous of getaway vehicles.

Tanker
Unsurprisingly, the worst vehicle to drive into a gunfight, but great for creating a mini disaster.

Bus
The school bus – the most controversial addition to the vehicle roster.

elements, you could really begin to feel like you were stretching your power and notoriety and leaving your mark across the whole of Miami.

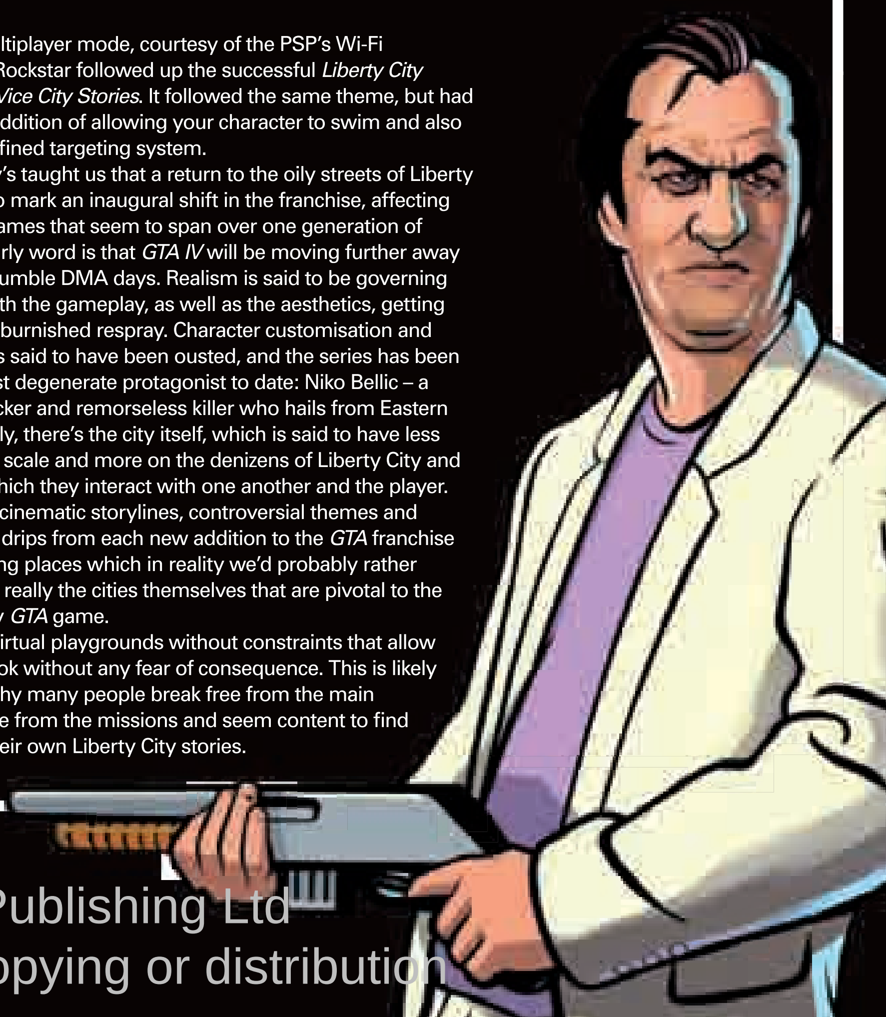
By the time *San Andreas* was due for release, the groundswell of hype and hysteria surrounding the series was unlike anything seen before. Feeling the pressure, Rockstar would need to create something bigger and grander in scale than what had come before, and it would succeed in many ways with *San Andreas*.

With a main story that would take the best part of 70 hours to finish, a lifetime of secrets to uncover, three huge metropolises to work through – connected by miles of countryside – and no interconnecting loading times, thanks to its seamless streaming, no one could argue that the game wasn't a technical marvel. But many felt, by Rockstar adding levelling up and appearing to concentrate on subterfuge elements of the game, that *San Andreas* lacked one vital ingredient: structure.

In typical *Grand Theft Auto* fashion, the franchise's transition to a new platform, in this case the PSP, with the '*Stories*' series, would prove to be another sterling effort by Rockstar. And also, in typical *GTA* fashion, it would kick things off by returning to Liberty City. *Liberty City Stories* (which was later ported to the PS2) was set three years before the original *GTA III*, and with a new protagonist, a new set of varied missions to work through and even allowing you to take to the skies in a helicopter, it would prove to be an almost flawless translation to the handheld. Although *Liberty City Stories* wasn't the first *GTA* game to see Rockstar incorporate multiplayer elements (*San Andreas* has a few co-op missions), it was the first in the series to incorporate an online multiplayer mode, courtesy of the PSP's Wi-Fi capabilities. Rockstar followed up the successful *Liberty City Stories* with *Vice City Stories*. It followed the same theme, but had the notable addition of allowing your character to swim and also included a refined targeting system.

So, history's taught us that a return to the oily streets of Liberty City seems to mark an inaugural shift in the franchise, affecting a trilogy of games that seem to span over one generation of hardware. Early word is that *GTA IV* will be moving further away from those humble DMA days. Realism is said to be governing the game, with the gameplay, as well as the aesthetics, getting a customary burnished respray. Character customisation and levelling up is said to have been ousted, and the series has been given its most degenerate protagonist to date: Niko Bellic – a human trafficker and remorseless killer who hails from Eastern Europe. Finally, there's the city itself, which is said to have less emphasis on scale and more on the denizens of Liberty City and the way in which they interact with one another and the player. For all of the cinematic storylines, controversial themes and bravado that drips from each new addition to the *GTA* franchise – despite being places which in reality we'd probably rather not visit – it's really the cities themselves that are pivotal to the appeal of any *GTA* game.

They are virtual playgrounds without constraints that allow us to run amok without any fear of consequence. This is likely the reason why many people break free from the main game, deviate from the missions and seem content to find and shape their own Liberty City stories.



XOR

CHICKENS, MASKS AND PLENTY OF HEAD-SCRATCHING



- **PUBLISHER:** LOGOTRON
- **RELEASED:** 1987
- **GENRE:** PUZZLE
- **FEATURED HARDWARE:** CPC
- **EXPECT TO PAY:** A FEW QUID



HISTORY

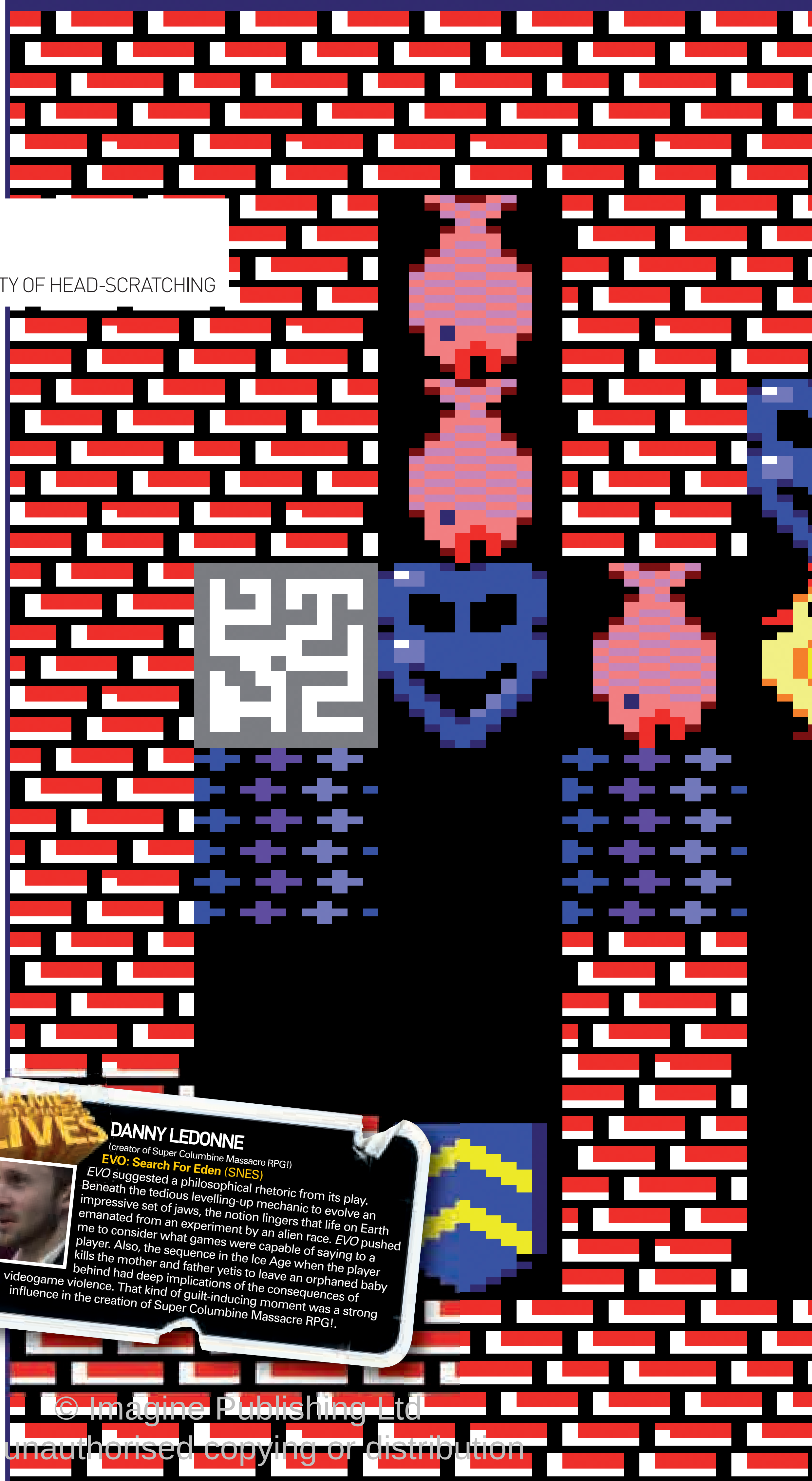
I so wanted to be accepted by 'The Order Of XOR' and get myself a badge, but sadly, I've never been able to finish any of the fiendishly frustrating mazes, let alone all 15. Although I have come very close in my relatively short lifetime. I almost completed 'Dots and Waves' and 'Chicken Supreme', but in the end my fate was to find itself tragically jammed between a halibut and a hard place, or was it hen-pecked to death by a chicken? I always forget.

Anyway, who'd have thought that being a shield could be so tough? Actually two shields – one called Questor and the other called Magus – that can do little more than move up, down, left and right and work as a team to nudge chickens, fishes, bombs and dolls to clear a path and collect the many masks of *XOR* that are dotted through its mazes.

Seriously though, one false move, one slightly overzealous nudge or a sudden memory lapse would be all it took to get stuck inside its world for all eternity. The key to *XOR*, of course, was taking your time, learning its maps and aiding yourself with a pen and a piece of paper, because success rested on completing its arduous labyrinths in as few moves as possible. Take too many and it was game over.

When you strip *XOR* down, it's essentially a very taxing take on *Boulder Dash*. One which, despite causing momentary bouts of wanting to launch things out of the window, would be perilously addictive and would always have you coming back for just one more go. To make life just that little bit easier, each level would contain four pieces of a jigsaw map, which, when pieced together, gave you a slight edge on your task of mask reclamation.

The brilliance of the game really came from its simplicity, *Head Over Heels*-style teamwork and gloriously chunky and effusive CPC graphics. *AA* awarded this game 91% and a Master Game accolade back in the day, and deservedly so. As it's a true puzzle classic.



GAME THAT CHANGED LIVES

DANNY LEDONNE

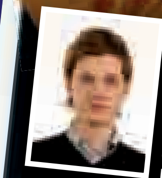
(creator of Super Columbine Massacre RPG!)

EVO: Search For Eden (SNES)

EVO suggested a philosophical rhetoric from its play. Beneath the tedious levelling-up mechanic to evolve an impressive set of jaws, the notion lingers that life on Earth emanated from an experiment by an alien race. *EVO* pushed me to consider what games were capable of saying to a player. Also, the sequence in the Ice Age when the player kills the mother and father yetis to leave an orphaned baby behind had deep implications of the consequences of videogame violence. That kind of guilt-inducing moment was a strong influence in the creation of Super Columbine Massacre RPG!.

NO. 24





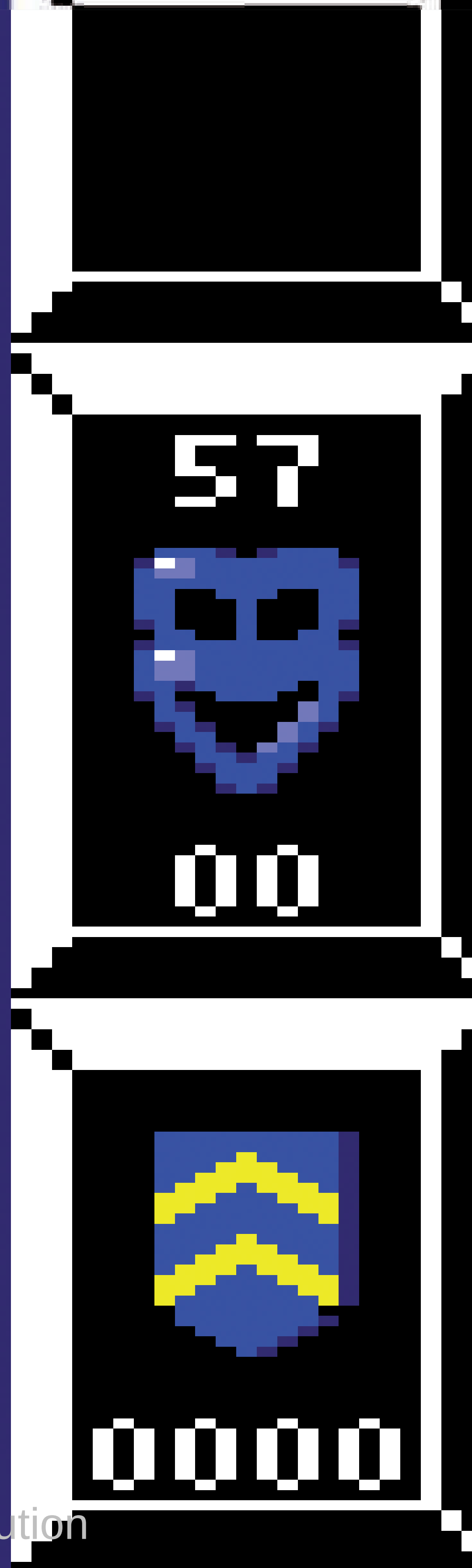
NO. 25

ROB SAUNDERS

(senior UK PR manager at Nintendo)

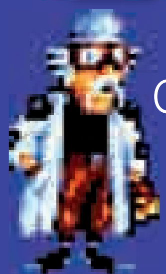
Super Mario Bros 3 (NES)

This time period was a golden age for videogames. The NES was my first console and I was blown away by *Super Mario Bros 3*. Huge, innovative and just great fun. *Super Mario World* took it a step further and upped the ante – finding all 96 levels was a badge of honour on the school bus in days before internet forums existed. Outside of your school nothing or no one else mattered. It was during the time of the SNES that I really decided I wanted to work in videogames and promised myself I'd play them for the rest of my life.



THE MAKING OF...

GUNSTAR HEROES



Fifteen years after its debut on Sega's Mega Drive, Treasure's Gunstar Heroes continues to find new admirers through its presence on the Wii's Virtual Console. Jonti Davies chats with Masato Maegawa, producer of Gunstar Heroes and president of Treasure, about the finer points of running and shooting through a 2D world







Treasure was born in early 1992, when a group of Konami employees with a shared vision left their parent company. Their motivation for quitting such a successful developer/publisher was simple: they wanted to fully realise their own ideas, free from the restraints typically felt by individuals in large corporations. Setting a dangerously high benchmark for the then-nascent developer, Treasure's landmark first release was the result of a kitchen-sink approach to the run-'n'-gun sub-genre, bringing new ideas to a game style that was in danger of becoming stale.

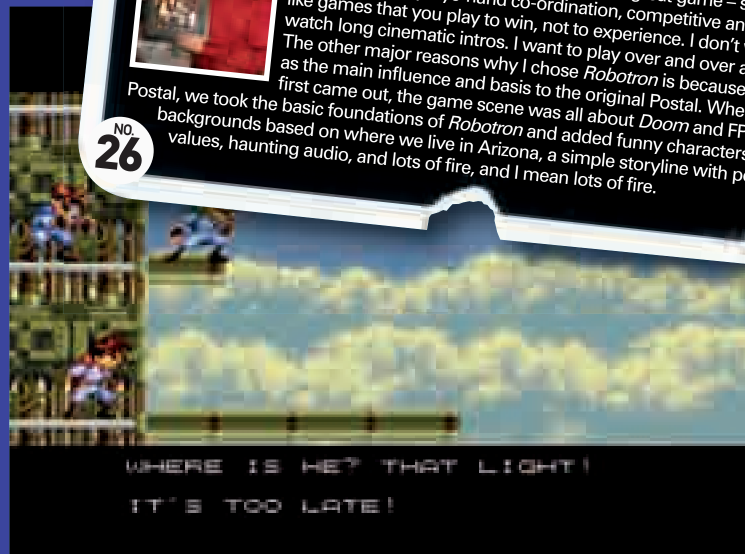
Masato Maegawa, Treasure's president and *Gunstar Heroes*' producer, is an affable chap, completely modest (but realistic) about the strength of his team's productions. We ask him about the context of *Gunstar Heroes* – what led to its production? "We'd only just established our new company, Treasure, so we were just really keen above all else to do something that we liked and something that was our forte," says Maegawa. "*Gunstar Heroes* was that game. We approached the project with the concept of 'anything goes', and we incorporated many types of separate ambitious ideas in that concept."

Among those fresh ideas for the genre were numerical energy counters in place of the more common one-hit-you're-dead routine; symbolic colour labelling in lieu of character names; a heady blend of long and close-range attacks; a mishmash of auto-scrolling and player-led passages of action; weapons that could be mixed to form new attacking powers; and some of the most imaginatively constructed bosses to grace a videogame, regardless of vintage or genre, peaking in the inspired melding of a board game with a string of boss battles. To say that *Gunstar Heroes* was created with a notion of 'anything goes' is an understated simplification on Maegawa's part.

Gunstar Heroes begins with a suitably explosive cut-scene sequence, which details the plight of Gunstar 9, the planet on which most of the game is played out. Ambiguous scripting initially leaves the player with only a vague idea of what might be afoot. "WHERE IS HE? THAT LIGHT! IT'S TOO LATE!"... "NO!... THE EARTH... UNDER ONE PERSON'S



» There are some memorable characters in *Gunstar*, including Dr Black, who refuses to give up his gem after Red defeats him.



» Some ambiguous writing leaves much of *Gunstar Heroes*' world open to interpretation.

GAMES THAT CHANGED LIVES

NO. 26

VINCE DESI

(founder of Running With Scissors, makers of Postal)

Robotron: 2084 (Arcade)



I started playing games in arcades and on the Atari 2600 and, for me, *Robotron* had all the elements of a great game – simple, fast, replayability, eye-hand co-ordination, competitive and fun. I like games that you play to win, not to experience. I don't want to watch long cinematic intros. I want to play over and over again. The other major reasons why I chose *Robotron* is because it served as the main influence and basis to the original Postal. When it first came out, the game scene was all about *Doom* and FPSs. In Postal, we took the basic foundations of *Robotron* and added funny characters and backgrounds based on where we live in Arizona, a simple storyline with positive values, haunting audio, and lots of fire, and I mean lots of fire.

POWER…" is a classic, befuddling exchange from this opening scene. But it eventually transpires that *Gunstars*' Red and Blue need to reclaim four gemstones in order to stop Smash Daisaku ('Daisaku' being Japanese for 'epic'), an evil dictator who looks a bit like *Street Fighter*'s M Bison, from using those gems to re-power a robot called Golden Silver, which had previously caused havoc by draining planets of their natural resources. Daisaku has even kidnapped Green, the elder brother of Red and Blue, who has been tricked into working for the enemy. Once the four crucial gems are retrieved, the heroic journey of Red and Blue eventually leads to the moon of Gunstar 9, where Red and Blue have to defeat the immense (3D-effect) Core Guard System, before a final multi-stage battle against the game's assembled cast of baddies brings Golden Silver out of its sleep.

In Red and Blue, two iconic videogame characters were born. With nomenclature bordering on the nondescript, they were never likely to capture the imagination of the population at large; but Red and Blue retain a certain mystique that still lights fires in the eyes of videogame connoisseurs. How did *Gunstar Heroes*' characters come to be named in such a way? Maegawa confesses that it wasn't his idea, but was in fact concocted by the *Gunstar* team's character graphics specialist, Han.

"Maybe for Han there was some deep meaning," Maegawa says, "but I think it's just a really good idea because it made it so easy for users to understand what was happening in the game."

Gunstar Heroes' development appears to have been a consummate team effort. Treasure has remained a small studio since its formation, and the first title to come out of Treasure was principally the work of just seven people. Maegawa speaks of the team in familiar terms, dropping their surnames and referring to them by the nicknames they use within Treasure to this day.

"EVEN WHILE THEY REMAINED AT KONAMI, THE CORE MEMBERS OF TREASURE WERE REGULARLY GETTING TOGETHER TO PLOT A REVOLUTION"

"There were only seven of us who worked on *Gunstar Heroes*: myself, as producer; Yaiman, who was the director and main programmer; Nami, who programmed the enemy AI and other routines; Han, who did the character graphics; Iuchi, who was responsible for the graphics; Non, who did all the music; and our sound effects man, Murata. It took us about ten months to develop *Gunstar Heroes* once we'd established Treasure, but even before that we'd meet in coffee shops and other places for planning sessions."

It's fascinating to visualise such coffee house meetings. Even while they remained at Konami, the core members of Treasure were regularly getting together to plot a revolution. And by finding Sega as a publisher, Treasure's coup d'état would soon be complete: *Gunstar Heroes* blew open the state of 2D platform-shooters, with Treasure rewriting the constitution.

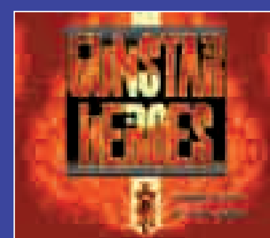
Treasure's deal with Sega was the result of a carefully planned proposal, which suggests that the results of the 'anything goes' approach were largely determined before development began. Maegawa is understandably satisfied with the outcome of events, and stresses that none of the ideas plotted in Tokyo cafés during 1991 and early 1992 were sacrificed or compromised in production.

"There was nothing missing from the final version of *Gunstar Heroes*. It ended up exactly as we first planned it – everything that was in our original specification and proposal to Sega was packed into the game that was eventually sold to players."

Mission accomplished, then. Working with Sega as a publisher, Treasure had full creative control – and that was key to *Gunstar Heroes*' success. Indeed, the only issue that resulted in a difference of opinion between Sega and Treasure was the relatively trivial matter of the game's name. Treasure had considered calling its debut project '*Blade Gunner*', in honour of Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*, but eventually settled on '*Lunatic Gunstar*'. Maegawa looks back on this matter with good humour.

"It's true that within Treasure we referred to the game as '*Lunatic Gunstar*', right from the start," he says with a wry smile. "We felt that the word 'Lunatic' was a perfect fit to convey the

IN THE KNOW



» **PUBLISHER:** SEGA
» **DEVELOPER:** TREASURE, INC
» **RELEASED:** 1993
» **GENRE:** SHOOT-'EM-UP
» **EXPECT TO PAY:** A FEW QUID



» Like *Super Mario Bros 3*, *Gunstar Heroes* has a big airship and is proud of it.



THE MAKING OF... GUNSTAR HEROES



GUNSTAR VERSIONS

There have been five *Gunstar Heroes* releases. The original Mega Drive game appeared in September 1993. An inferior Game Gear version followed, featuring odd modifications such as a switch from mine carts to helicopter jetpacks in the Underground Mine stage; it lacked some of the original's content (most conspicuously, the Dice Palace level was dropped completely) and ran at a much lower frame rate than the Mega Drive version. An enjoyable sequel, *Gunstar Super Heroes*, was released on the Game Boy Advance in 2005, but this too falls a little way short of the standard set by the Mega Drive original.

It wasn't until late 2006 that the original game resurfaced on the Wii's Virtual Console, preserved in perfect form via the wonders of emulation. More impressive still, in February 2006 Sega of Japan had published the *Gunstar Heroes: Treasure Box* as part of its PS2-based *Sega Ages* series. The disc contained both the American Genesis version of *Gunstar Heroes* and the Japanese Mega Drive code, along with a subtly different prototype build and the Game Gear version (useful purely for reference).



DEVELOPER HIGHLIGHTS

ALIEN SOLDIER
SYSTEM: MEGA DRIVE, Wii VIRTUAL CONSOLE
YEAR: 1994

RADIANT SILVERGUN
SYSTEMS: SATURN, ARCADE
YEAR: 1998

GRADIUS V (PICTURED)
SYSTEMS: PS2
YEAR: 2004



exhilaration of our game, what with all the explosions and detonations; but that didn't go down too well with Sega of America, who thought that the word 'Lunatic' conveyed a really bad image. Anyway, the 'Heroes' part of the title came from Sega of America – they seemed to think that 'Heroes' was a cool term because it carried a notion of there being some great sense of justice in the game – so in the end we were requested to adopt the *Gunstar Heroes* title."

Irrespective of concerns over its title, Sega must have been happy to see the results of Treasure's early Mega Drive work, especially considering the limitations of the hardware. Maegawa recalls that Treasure had to work around the Mega Drive's limited palette to achieve the desired visual style in *Gunstar Heroes*. "Because of the relatively low number of colours the Mega Drive can display, we had various difficulties in doing what we wanted to do," Maegawa explains. "At first we were drawing the backgrounds with a single palette of 16 colours, but we thought the results looked too sad and desolate, so I requested that we draw scenery with two palettes, giving us 32 colours to work with, which is what we ended up doing."

Aside from the richness of *Gunstar Heroes*' extended palette use, effects such as the rotation and scaling of sprites were used expertly to create a sense of depth. Most impressively, there can be a dozen or more characters on screen and yet the frame rate holds up almost flawlessly throughout, regardless of how explosive the action is becoming. The transformations of the Green-controlled Seven Force boss show Treasure in a cocky frame of mind, juggling and spinning sprites as though they were going out of fashion (funny thing: they were). The faux 3D of the Core Guard System, too, was a spectacle of some note in 1993, its impact almost measuring up to the feats of contemporary FX chip-powered games over on the SNES.

Gunstar Heroes' soundtrack is also hugely impressive. The score shifts in pitch and tone quite dramatically, waltzing with the on-screen action without ever stepping on its toes. We ask Maegawa how such well-judged tunes were achieved in light of the ever-changing nature of the gameplay and its themes. "Well, the music producer was Non," Maegawa reiterates, "who is still here at Treasure. He always, without fail, waits for all levels of a game to be designed so that he can experience the movement of the whole game, and then he begins his composition. And that's how he was when we worked on *Gunstar Heroes*."



» The appropriately named 'happy item room' offers sustenance and weapons in the middle of The Dice Palace.

Another vital ingredient of *Gunstar Heroes*' unrelenting punch, often overlooked, is its clever use of sound effects. From the creaking of robotic bosses' limbs to the easily identifiable and distinguishable weapons effects, Murata's work almost sounds like percussion to Non's music. We ask whether Murata worked on *Gunstar Heroes* in the same manner as Non. "Yes," says Maegawa. "In a similar style to Non, our sound effects specialist Murata waits for everything else to be in place and functional before he begins, very slowly and carefully, to apply his sound effects."

Playing *Gunstar Heroes* today, it's difficult to imagine how contemporary publishers would react to its hotchpotch design. Of course, Treasure has virtual immunity in this regard, and can apparently still get away with releasing games that defy convention (see 2001's *Freak Out* on the PS2 for a prime example of bizarre game design being smuggled past publishers and out into retail), but this is principally because of Treasure's reputation – the basis of which was laid in *Gunstar Heroes*.

There are initially four stages to play through, but these can be approached in any order. Only after these levels have been completed and the four gems have been collected does *Gunstar Heroes* shift into a linear gear.

One of *Gunstar Heroes*' most inventive stages is the Dice Maze level, where Black beckons the player to his 'strange fortress', inside which is found The Dice Palace. A board game of sorts ensues, with Red and/or Blue throwing a die to move around a board containing spaces that lead to mini-boss fights, free weapons (received in the

» There is a sick side to *Gunstar Heroes*, with Smash Daisaku attempting to cause Red to crash by throwing live soldiers at him.



LEO TAN

(UK PR manager, Capcom)

Street Fighter II (SNES)

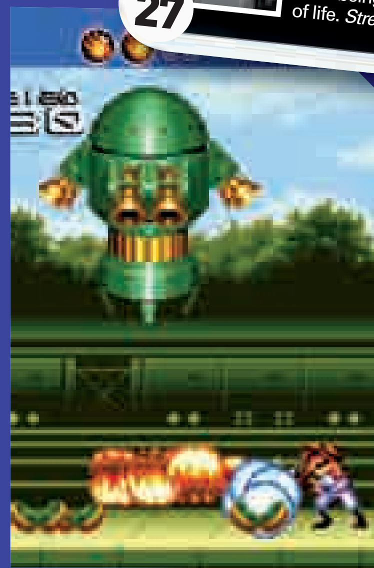


NO. 27

Street Fighter II was the game that really changed my life. I would go to a strange town if I heard they had a machine just so I could play against different people. And then when it came to the SNES, everything went haywire. I bought a stick and learnt everything about everyone. I went from knowing all the moves to knowing all the frame data. And games went from being a bit of fun to something I could focus on as a way of life. *Street Fighter II* completely dominated me for years.



» Being able to shoot in eight directions, even when piloting the Empire's Space Craft, is something of a boon.



"AS DEBUTS GO, GUNSTAR HEROES IS A PHENOMENAL ACHIEVEMENT – FEW DEVELOPERS HAVE MANAGED TO WORK SUCH ASSURED MAGIC IN THEIR INITIAL PROJECTS"

'happy item room'), and fights without weapons (tricky). One space is reserved for the traditional board game penalty of reversing your progress, while the final space sets up a decisive battle with the Yakuza-styled Black, who shows up in his Beat Stepper robot.

"The dice stage is really experimental," Maegawa concurs, "and again it was under the idea of 'anything' being acceptable that we decided to throw a board game into the mix. But none of us are particularly fans of board games as such…"

Other levels are also experimental. For example, the Underground Mine stage is literally 'on rails', with the action switching to a ferocious pace as Red/Blue journey deep underground on high-speed mine carts. With parallel tracks at the top/bottom or left/right (depending on the section of track, progress through the mine can be horizontal or vertical), a jump to midair enables the cart to escape from the magnetic field of one track and enter the field of another, opening the possibility of upside-down mine cart control. Nintendo's recent *Super Mario Galaxy* has been lauded for doing a similar thing – *Gunstar Heroes* was clearly ahead of its time.

As well as experimental play concepts, there are radical and unexpected shifts in style. The first stage plays like a *Contra*-esque platform-shooter – but by the fifth level Red and Blue are piloting the Empire's Space Craft in what is ostensibly Treasure's first attempt at a horizontally scrolling shmup – but still retains the omni-directional shooting system found in all other areas of *Gunstar Heroes*. Again returning to the *Gunstar Heroes* team's enthusiasm for including anything/everything in Treasure's debut production, Maegawa explains how the game came to be such a diverse proposition.

"Because we had this concept of 'anything goes', we decided that if it was fun and interesting, we would put anything into the mix. And because of that *Gunstar Heroes* ended up having shooting, action and fighting elements."

This certainly wasn't development by numbers, though. In playing the game there is no sense that *Gunstar Heroes*' design was at all contrived; in many areas, such as its insistent flitting from automated scrolling scenes to movement-led platforming sections, the game almost seems deliberately prone to challenge and confuse players, rather than sweet-talking them into appreciation of its qualities. It appears to have been the product of a wild burst

TREASURE BEFORE TREASURE

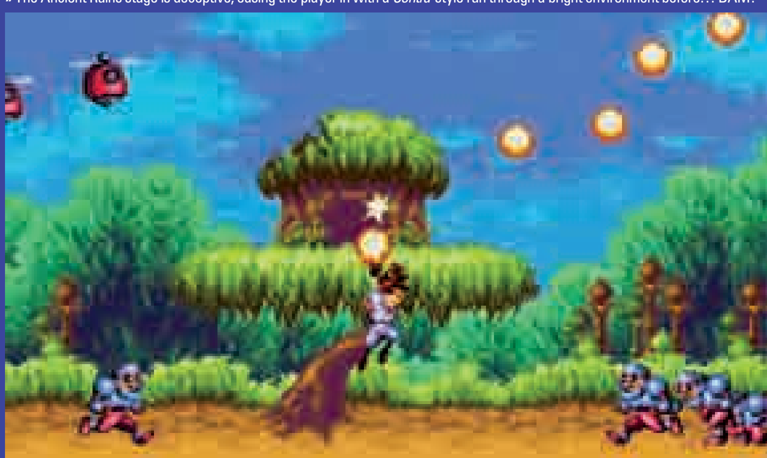
We ask Maegawa to set the record straight: which games did he and his Treasure team actually work on while they were at Konami? Politely, he refuses, stating that he'd "rather not name specific titles, so as to avoid any potential trouble with Konami." Fair enough. "But I can tell you," he adds, "that I worked on Game Boy, Famicom and Super Famicom games for Konami while I ws there." This didn't quite sate our curiosity, so we did some research, completely unaided by Maegawa by the way, and discovered some rather startling revelations.

From what we've learned from our Japanese sources, Maegawa worked on the following games before founding Treasure: *Dracula Densetsu* (aka *Castlevania: The Adventure,* Game Boy, 1989), *Gun Sight* (aka *Laser Invasion,* NES, 1991), *Rollergames* (NES, 1991), *Bucky O'Hare* (arcade, 1992; NES, 1992).

Other Treasure members such as Yaiman, Han, Iuchi and Nami worked on these Konami titles: *Quarth* (arcade, 1989; MSX, 1990), *Aliens* (arcade, 1990), *Punk Shot* (arcade, 1990), *Akumajou Dracula* (aka *Super Castlevania IV,* Super NES, 1991), *Escape Kids* (arcade, 1991), *The Simpsons* (arcade, 1991), *Axelay* (SNES, 1992), *Contra Spirits* (aka *Super Probotector,* SNES, 1992). Iuchi also went on to do a gig as the level designer of Time Warner Interactive's bizarrely gruesome 1997 Saturn game *Shinrei Jusatsushi Taroumaru.*



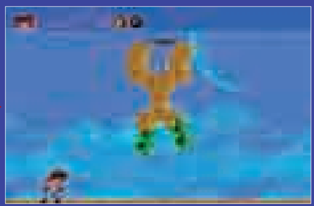
» The Ancient Ruins stage is deceptive, easing the player in with a *Contra*-style run through a bright environment before… BAM!



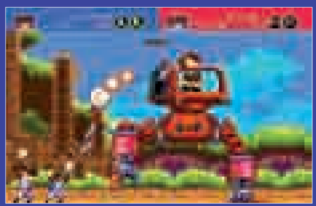


THE MAKING OF... GUNSTAR HEROES

TOUGH BOSSES



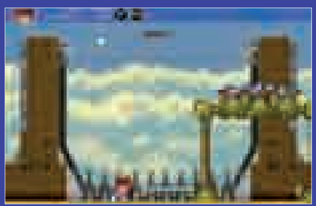
Bravoo Man is built like a brick shithouse – or at least, he's been constructed from brick – but his moves are limited to a flying spin and clumsy kick.



Pink and a couple of sidekicks called Kain and Kotaro attempt to stop Red and Blue by blocking their path with the interestingly named Pinky Loader contraption.



Seven Force is piloted by Green, who guides it through seven transformations. Iterations include a golden gun, a blue phoenix, an iron man and a tiger.



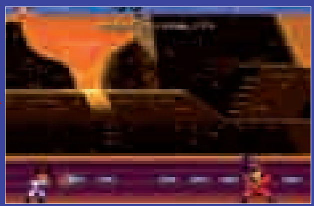
This early mid-level boss is easily beaten, and can be attacked from positions on the robot's feet and under its body, as well as from above.



Smash Daisaku challenges Red to a fight on the wings of a helicopter (yes, a helicopter with wings) before making way for his bulkier comrade, Orange, to have a go.



Doctor Black appears as the final boss of his rather strange fortress, having already led Red/Blue through a board game full of challenges.



Smash Daisaku returns, this time with a jetpack and flame-thrower. He's easy to dodge, but he has more stamina. He's all that stands between Red/Blue and the moon.



Seven Force doesn't look quite so threatening when seen in space, but it really zips about the screen and is certainly not an easy enemy to defeat.



The Core Guard System is one of *Gunstars'* few self-explanatory features. It launches a series of attacks, such as chains of orbs and miniature spacecraft.



The final boss series leads up to a fight against the revived Golden Silver robot. Before that, all of the game's main enemies reappear in sequence.



Golden Silver presents *Gunstar Heroes'* final challenge. It's effective to grab and throw him, but it's also essential that you shoot at the four gems to drain Golden Silver's power.



» Care for a piece of Gunstar Gum? Never mind in-game advertising – *Gunstar Heroes* did in-game self-promotion.

of creative thinking, and not the result of any focus testing or considerations of marketability. Maegawa confirms Treasure's slightly random and carefree methodology. "We didn't really bother about the details of how each stage was being developed," he says, "but we produced each scene with a different attitude, which led to there being plenty of variety in the game. I feel that as a result of this approach the overall balance came out really well."

Variety was also seen in the game's weapon system, which starts from a base of four weapon types (Force, Lightning, Chaser and Fire) but expands to 14 variations via the mixing of different weapon types. Red/Blue can choose one weapon initially, but have space in their primitive 'inventory' (displayed at the top of the screen) to hold two weapons simultaneously. Each of these weapons can be used in isolation, if so desired, or the two can be used in combination; the three choices on offer from each brace of weapons can be cycled through mid-game by holding A and B. It's an effective system, encouraging tactical use of weapons. Rather than simply give the player a procession of increasingly powerful weapons, Treasure decided to spread *Gunstar*'s range of attacking options in a more imaginative way.

"We developed the weapon combination system like that," says Maegawa, "because we wanted players to discover their own ways of getting through stages, and for them to have lots of different experiences according to which weapons they were using on which levels. The weapons become different when you go from Easy mode to Expert mode, as well."

As with many subsequent Treasure titles, *Gunstar Heroes* is not a huge game when measured in terms of how long it takes to get to the credits – it can be played through in an hour, if you're good – but it presents such a wealth of diverse ideas during play that it manages to project an unfeasibly large personality. This is a game, which, once played, cannot be forgotten.

The most memorable scenes in *Gunstar Heroes* are probably its boss encounters (it soon became apparent that boss design was one of Treasure's strengths, as evidenced by such incredible sights as that of the Creator in *Radiant Silvergun* and the interplanetary conclusion to *Sin & Punishment*), which span the gamut from a brick man in the form of Bravoo Man to a midget called Minion Soldier. Maegawa recognises the importance of these characters to the game's enduring appeal, citing the impact of *Gunstar Heroes'* bosses on





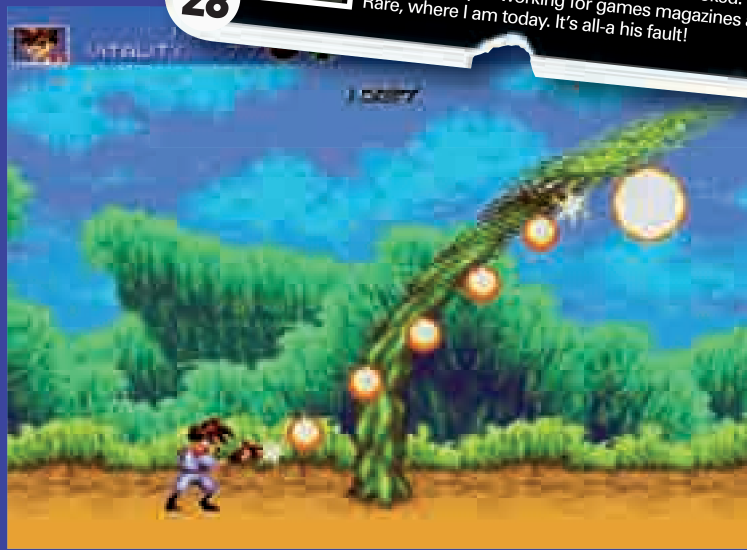
WIL OVERTON (concept artist - Rare)

Super Mario World (SNES)

Although it's not my all-time favourite (that honour is reserved for *Mr Do!*), I guess the game that changed my life was *Super Mario World*. I remember seeing it in London for the first time when the SNES launched in 1990 and just being blown away. For the first time it looked like a proper arcade title running on a console and not just a sub-standard port. I was hooked. That led eventually to working for games magazines and at Rare, where I am today. It's all-a his fault!

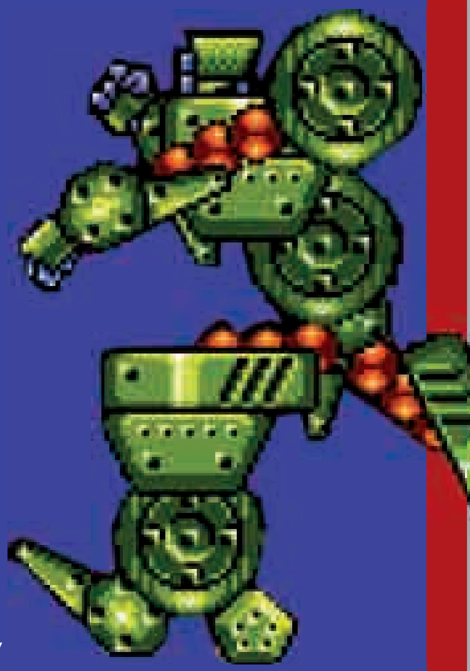


» Red's rather confused; he was sure that there was some way of getting to the exit. He just could rember how to reach it.



» Mini-bosses are peppered throughout every level of *Gunstar Heroes*.

"WE FELT THAT THE WORD 'LUNATIC' WAS A PERFECT FIT TO CONVEY THE EXHILARATION OF OUR GAME, WITH ALL THE EXPLOSIONS AND DETONATIONS; BUT THAT DIDN'T GO DOWN TOO WELL WITH SEGA OF AMERICA" MASATO MAEGAWA ON THE NAMING OF GUNSTAR HEROES



players who make the effort to explore all corners of the game. "As you might expect," he says, "my favourite boss is probably the famous one: Seven Force. The seven transformations are absolutely worth seeing."

Describing features of *Gunstar Heroes* as being 'worth seeing' is wholly appropriate in a game whose overarching theme is ultimately less to do with story and more obviously centred on the fireworks of destruction. 'Anything goes' might be one recurring ideal, but the notion that 'more is more' also had an influence on Treasure's work here, and the studio's fondness for creating spectacular set pieces has never gone away. Maegawa retains a childish appreciation of pyrotechnics, along with an understanding of the power of scale.

"My favourite aspects of *Gunstar Heroes* are the way in which scenes and stages become progressively more expansive," Maegawa smiles, "and the sense of exhilaration that comes from seeing so many explosions! I think that was really refreshing for many players."

Time has been kind to *Gunstar Heroes*, and it deserves its place in the highest rank of Treasure's consistently excellent output over the past 15 years (it made number three in **Retro Gamer** 44's run-'n'-gun special). As debuts go, it's a phenomenal achievement – few developers have managed to work such assured magic in their initial projects.

For Maegawa and friends, the creation of *Gunstar Heroes* was a cathartic experience, with their newly acquired independence fuelling their enthusiasm. We ask Maegawa if Treasure faced any difficulties in adjusting to its work as an independent developer.

"There isn't any particularly trying episode that I can recall from the development period – it all went really smoothly. But as we'd just established Treasure, we were of one mind in thinking, 'At last we can make the exact kind of game that we love.' We were completely absorbed in making our game and all thoroughly enjoying the project. That's what I remember foremost about making *Gunstar Heroes*."

» Under siege from all directions and yet still in with a fighting chance.



» Green realises how stupid he's been and decides to make amends with a kamikaze attack on Golden Silver.



DESERT ISLAND DISKS

WHAT CHERISHED GAMES WOULD YOU TAKE TO THE ISLAND?



THE COMEDIAN

SIMON MUNNERY

TO MARK RETRO GAMER'S HALF CENTURY, WE DECIDED TO DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT WITH DESERT ISLAND DISKS. WE GRAB A COMEDIAN, A TV PRESENTER AND A ROCK GOD, EACH WITH THEIR OWN TALE, AND ASK WHAT GAME THEY'D TAKE TO THEIR DIGITAL PARADISE. PAUL DRURY IS RELIEVED THEY DIDN'T ALL PICK ROBOTRON…



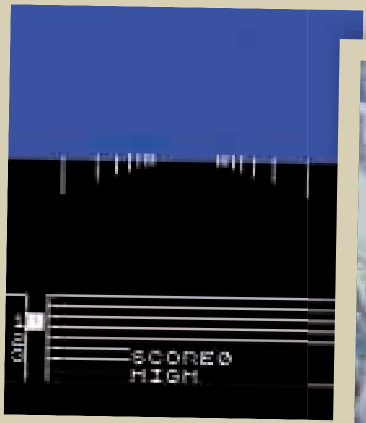
"Well that just shows what Jeff Minter knows about piles and wanking," says Simon Munnery, taking a large swig of post-gig lager.

We better put this in context. Munnery has just come off stage after entertaining a packed Nottingham comedy club with a set comprising of sharp one-liners, observational rambles about the blokes who play pool in pubs and a surreal deconstruction of Lennon's *Imagine*. But we haven't cornered him to discuss his exposition of Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle through the medium of comic verse. We know what he used to get up to in the Eighties.

Before he started on his comedy career, Simon Munnery was a games programmer. He began on the ZX80 and ZX81, before progressing to the Spectrum and then switching across to Commodore's VIC-20. It was for the latter machine that he wrote *Asteroids*, a game that Jeff Minter has publicly described as "a pile of wank."

Simon shakes his head and adjusts his glasses. "I mean, you can't have a pile of wank. It's literally nonsense. Have another go mate. You may be good at code but you ain't mastered language."

And despite his regrettable version of Atari's vector classic, Munnery knows a fair bit about code. "I got a ZX80 when I was 13," he explains. "I was well into programming. That was what it was for. You could run a nuclear power station with it apparently. That's what they said. I loved it. Except for the screen flick. And the terrible keyboard. And the 1K of memory. Apart from that, it was brilliant. But we didn't know any different, see. I actually built a crystal radio. I come from another era, mate. Then I got a ZX81. I started to learn Z80 machine code. And they say Latin is a dead language…"



» **Above:** *Night Driver* for the Speccy, featuring a Ford Capri, possibly. **Right:** Simon models for Bentley Bear haberdashers.



Munnery talks in short, staccato sentences not dissimilar to Assembler, actually. He soon became fluent and after having a BASIC listing or two published in *Personal Computer World* magazine, he was approached by Abacus Software. He produced a *Breakout* clone for the ZX81, before moving up to the Spectrum, where he was obviously confident enough to stick his moniker in the title of his next release for the company.

"Ah yes, *Munnery's Mergatroids*. Arrogant, I tell you, arrogant! Was I doing an Archer MacLean? Who? I've never heard of him…'

Piloting your ship, The Spirit of Watford, across the desolate valley of the Mergatroids, the *Battlezone*-influenced 3D blaster came with a free game on the B-side, though *Sinclair User* suggested that to call *Night Driver* a game is "to use the term loosely." But then they say comedy is supposed to be tragedy plus time.

All was forgiven thanks to his one and only release for Software Projects – 1983's *Ometron*. "My finest achievement to this day," he smiles with what seems like genuine pride. "It has a faster wireframe animation technique than anyone else has ever devised for the Spectrum. As far as I know. So fast you couldn't see it. Quite clever how I did it. I did all the multiplication and put it into this vast table. I think that took up most of the 48K. Instead of doing any calculations it just looked it up. Yes, my finest game.'

Issue 3 of *Crash* agreed, praising the 3D graphics and awarding the title a very respectable 80%. Yet at the height of his Z80 powers, he jumped ship to the VIC-20 and developed a trio of arcade clones for Bug-Byte.

"I had to learn 6502 which was completely different. Yeah, I'm bilingual. In two dead languages! Was I concerned about copyright? Nah, no idea about that. A teenager, see. But it's not like I was stealing anything. Reverse engineering they call it. See what you want and build it yourself. It's the difference between nicking a car and seeing a Ford Capri go past and building your own imitation. I don't think that's copyright infringement. It's the sincerest form of flattery."

As previously noted, few would refer to his *Asteroids* clone as flattering. His take on *Scramble* was hardly arcade perfect, though considering he'd never actually played the original it's a passable effort. *Cosmiads*, his version of *Galaxian*, is the best of the bunch, with impressively swooping aliens and a charming feline quality to the graphics.

"What you will notice is the smooth motion, done quite cleverly through changing a character set," he nods. "Only two characters, but quite tricky to do on the VIC. You've got to compare it to other VIC games of the time, which tended to have quite blocky motion, but mine was quite smooth. Yes, I did all that. Proper bedroom coder. I went up to Liverpool a couple of times and was invited to work there by Bug-Byte. I was 16 so it was 'oooh, maybe'. Fast cars and cash. Or stay on at sixth form and go to college. My parents said stay on at school. I thought they were probably right. Maybe it was the wrong decision. Dunno.'

Despite having enough readies to "take up skiing to shock my parents", Simon was tiring of the coding life anyway. He had begun work on a complex wargame for the Commodore 64 but never got further than scattering hundreds of dots across the screen. "To be honest I just got fed up with it all. Staring at a computer screen for ages and ages. Seems strange now when everyone has to do it by law. Keeping in touch with their so-called friends. I was fed up with the beep, beep noises. The monk-like pursuit of debugging things. The solitariness of it."

So, except for taking a few programming temping jobs to pay off his student debt and the occasional joke about the 6502 instruction set inserted into one of his stage routines (you had to be there, apparently), he left the world of games development behind way back in 1985 and hasn't looked back since. His career in comedy now spans over 20 years, with a CV that features such creations as Alan Parker: Urban Warrior and The League Against Tedium and has included numerous radio and television appearances.

Yet he can claim a rather unusual gaming legacy. If you listen to Jeff Minter's anti-*Asteroids* rant in its entirety at http://home.btconnect.com/suppose/munnery.mp3 you will discover that the hairy coder was so incensed by the awfulness of Simon Munnery's effort, that he was inspired to set up his own software house. Are you rather proud that you're partly responsible for the existence of Llamasoft then, Simon?

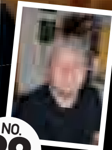
He drains his pint and slams the empty glass down in mock outrage. "No. I'm utterly devastated. Without intending to, I have created a monster!"



» *Asteroids* for the VIC-20. Didn't go down well at the Minter house.

IAN MALCOLM

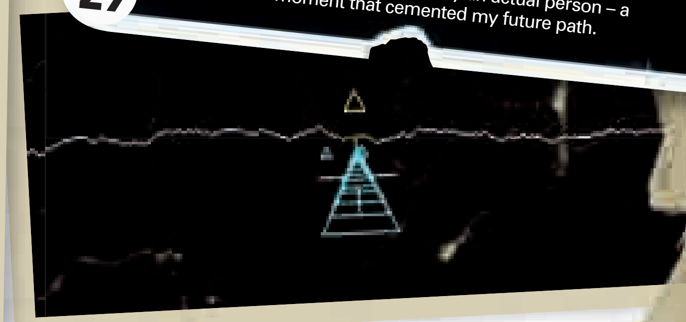
(former Melbourne House programmer)



NO. 29

Adventure (Atari 2600)

For a kid with no computer access to play 'proper' adventures, *Adventure* was a dream. Projecting my heroic fantasies onto that square character, exploring those corridors took on a mystical quality. Discovering the room with Warren Robinett's signature confirmed that this world was created by an actual person – a pivotal moment that cemented my future path.



» *Mergatroids*' desolate landscape does indeed recall Watford in the Eighties…

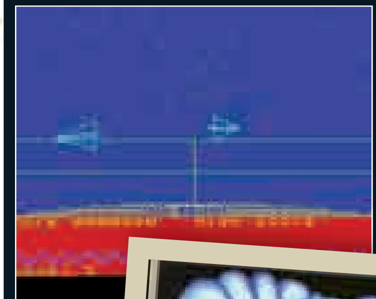
"I GOT FED UP WITH THE SOLITARINESS OF IT ALL. THE MONK-LIKE PURSUIT OF DEBUGGING THINGS"

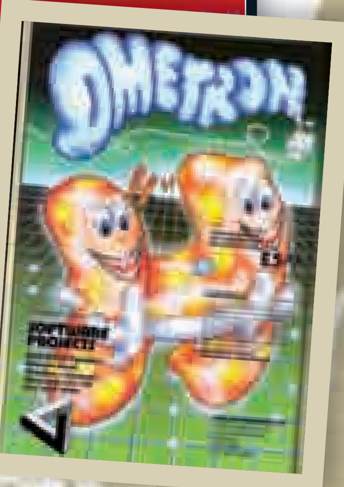
SIMON MUNNERY ON WHY HE SWAPPED CODE FOR COMEDY

SIMON'S DESERT ISLAND DISK

OMETRON – ZX SPECTRUM

"I'd take BBC One. Controversial. Oh, it's not a computer game. Erm… *Ometron*! Amazing graphics. Why not take my own game? No, sorry. The entire works of Jeff Minter!"





DESERT ISLAND DISKS

WHAT CHERISHED GAMES WOULD YOU TAKE TO THE ISLAND?





» On the road with The Alarm. The spirit of 1976 indeed.



» We know what happened to Gareth, but where's Gilbert now?





» **Above:** Waking up to Gaz's huge hair was how many of us began our weekends in the mid-Eighties…
Right: Gareth's favourite Amiga game, the epic *Dune II*.

THE TV PRESENTER

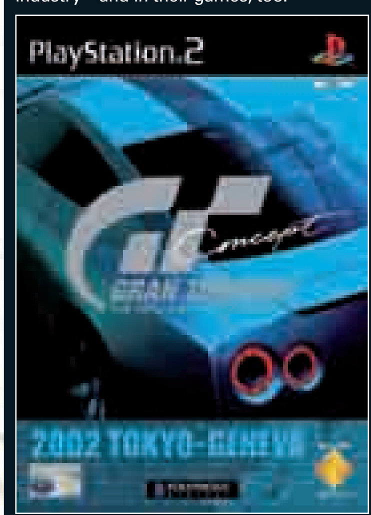
GAZ TOP

With all due respect to road crews, the job of 'roadie' is seldom considered the first step to a career in anything. For Welsh lad Gareth Jones though, the six years he spent lugging flight cases round for The Alarm is what made him the man he is today.

GAZ'S DESERT ISLAND DISK

GRAN TURISMO CONCEPT – PS2

"It had some really curious and interesting cars. I remember it had an odd little Toyota concept car, which had a rear wiper that wagged quite deliberately like the tail of a dog to look cute. That batty, freestyle Japanese thinking you get in the motor industry – and in their games, too."



"Lead singer Mike Peters called me Gagsy Top due to my spiky hair and that became Gaz Top," says Jones. "The Alarm's record company IRS had a TV wing and having interviewed the band so many times, they ended up asking me to do this cookery feature where I prepared spaghetti bolognaise while telling rock-'n'-roll anecdotes. It never happened, but it planted an idea in my mind…"

No, Gaz wasn't destined to become a celeb chef. Instead, he auditioned for a new music channel called Music Box and went from being a roadie to having his own TV show. You'll most likely recognise him from his stint on Saturday morning kid's show *Get Fresh*, which he hosted with Charlotte Hindle and the slobbering Gilbert the Alien from 1986 to 1988.

Gareth's been in TV ever since, presenting science show *How 2* for over 16 years, along with numerous credits in front and behind the camera. He was given an Amiga in 1990 as part of his remit as a children's presenter and though he was absorbed by *Dune* and its sequel, he freely admits to having more of a professional interest than a passion for games.

However, when your partner is Violet Berlin, former presenter of Nineties videogame show *Bad Influence!* and long-standing games journo, you don't always have a choice, explains Gareth. "Violet has a healthy, or unhealthy enough interest in games, which pervades through. She has an awareness of what's going on and by a process of osmosis, it seeps into my life."

The couple got together in 1998 and having set up their own production company, took over the reins of Bravo's *GamePad* after its shaky first series. With Violet as presenter and Gareth as director, they aimed to widen the show's appeal.

"The majority of games programmes have perhaps been made by people with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder for people with OCD, or gamers, as they're known. Our plan was to open it out. Bravo was a very male channel but you could double the audience if the bloke's girlfriend saw something interesting… something broader and not necessarily about games. We tried to put games in the real world."

An admirable intent and with such memorable cameos as *Little Britain*'s Matt Lucas giving advice on how not to play games and Damian (the 'popstar' responsible for *Time Warp*) testing dance games, it tried to do something different.

Gareth's not ruled out a return to games broadcasting, but for now, he's busy producing the highly entertaining podcast Gareth Jones On Speed (download it at www.garethjones.tv), running WhizzBang TV and bringing up his two children. So, are the little 'uns avid gamers?

Violet snatches the phone from Gareth. "I'm in charge of that. He's not really au fait with it all. We have retro consoles in this house. They play on the SNES. Part of my grand scheme…"

Ah, we know who holds the joypads in that relationship…

THE ROCK GOD

LEMMY

"You have to ring at exactly 9.30pm GMT, which is 1.30pm in LA," explains Lemmy's PR man carefully. "He gets up at 1pm and, erm, you don't want to talk to him after 2pm…"

And so, it was with a little trepidation that we dialled the long string of numbers, hoping to catch the legendary Motörhead front man in the narrow window between him getting out of bed and before he said good morning to Mr Jack Daniels. We'd read in an interview that although Lemmy was entitled to a bus pass, he was still a creature of the night. Except now, it was a GameCube rather than groupies that was keeping him up. After decades of answering questions about *Ace Of Spades* and life on the road, we thought he might fancy a natter about videogames for a change.

Our hunch was right. In his unmistakeable growly tones, he told us of his first encounters with *Pong*, *Space Invaders* and other gaming classics of the golden age in the pubs and clubs of the gig circuit.

"I used to play *Asteroids* in this boozer in Portobello Road. My high-score name? LEM. Well it would be, wouldn't it? Yeah and *Tempest*. Me and the band used to play it at this club in New York City that opened at 3am. A great game to play when you're drunk." He gives us a gruff chuckle and continues. "Then there was *Ms Pac-man*. I became something of an expert when I first came to America. But it's got to be the fast version. I'm a tough cookie on the fast one…"

Clearly, speed was as important on screen as it was on stage, so it came as something of a surprise that when he finally got a console of his own, he used it for more cerebral and sedate pursuits. "The first machine I owned was an Atari Lynx. I had this chess game on it, *Ultimate Chess Challenge*, which I played a lot. I like any chess game… as long as it has loads of levels and remembers my fu*king moves."

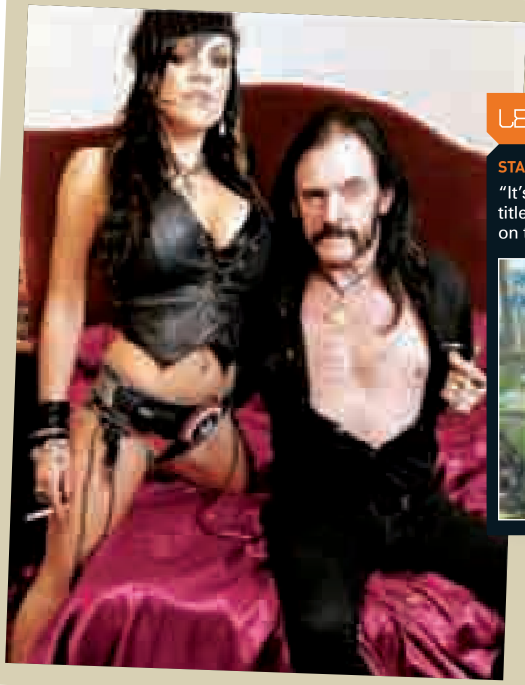
His Atari handheld was soon joined by a SNES and a Mega Drive, the latter introducing him to the delights of *Sonic The Hedgehog* ("I prefer Knuckles though. He can fly, man…") and our editor's favourite, *Strider*. "Couldn't get through that in two fu*king months. Kept me entertained, though." Then came a Dreamcast, a GameCube and an Xbox, though he hadn't yet been lured into the wonderful world of online gaming.

"Nah, I'm an onanist. Personal gratification. The rest of the band won't play videogames with me on the tour bus any more, either," he says. "It's because I always beat 'em. It's been the same with Poker Dice for ten years now…"

It was nearly 2pm and Lemmy had to "be somewhere." He said he'd buy us a beer when Motörhead played Nottingham later that month and we could continue our chat. A true gent and a passionate gamer. We dutifully turned up post-gig, holding a Game Gear with *Sonic The Hedgehog* plugged in, but a burly American informed us that Lemmy was "busy right now."

That was four years ago. Hoping to find out if Lemmy was now clutching a Wiimote, we tried to contact his PR man, but he'd moved on long ago. We still had the telephone number though, so at exactly 9.30pm one Monday night, we thought we'd try our luck. His answerphone message consisted solely of ten seconds of the sound of someone being spanked. He was probably engrossed in *Guitar Hero III* we thought and decided not to leave a message…

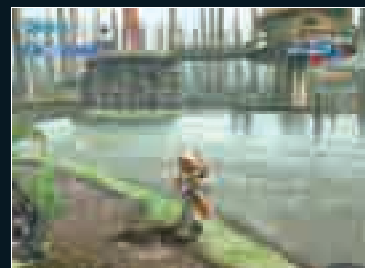
"I BECAME SOMETHING OF AN EXPERT AT MS PAC-MAN. BUT IT'S GOT TO BE THE FAST VERSION. I'M A TOUGH COOKIE ON THE FAST ONE…"
LEMMY ON HIS NEED FOR SPEED

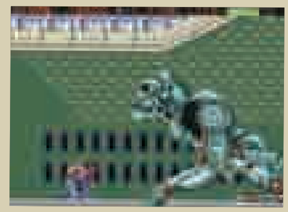


LEMMY'S DESERT ISLAND DISH

STAR FOX ADVENTURES – GAMECUBE

"It's a long game… I don't think *Star Fox* titles ever let you down. I liked the original on the SNES a lot. Why? I just like flying…"





» **Above:** We don't usually need an excuse to mention *Strider* in these pages, but as Lemmy likes it, here's a screen shot, too.
Left: Lemmy and friend prepare to record a new answerphone message.





» Released for the Amiga in 1993, *Motörhead* had Lemmy battling the evils of acid house. "Didn't I have to kill hippies, too?" he vaguely recalls.

GAMES LIVES

NO. 30



SIMON BUTLER (veteran computer artist)
Super Metroid (SNES)

Super Metroid didn't do much graphically that the NES hadn't done before, apart from a few Mode 7 tricks, but what it did so amazingly was suck you in with a world that slowly came to life. A world that wanted nothing but the complete obliteration of this interloper; Samus. It's a game I would give my eye teeth to have worked on and which having played has influenced forever the way I look at games and game design.

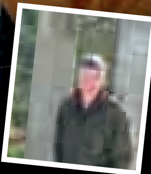
RETROINSPECTION

DREAMCAST





LIVES



JOHN TWIDDY (programmer and creator of Last Ninja)

Jumpman (C64)

NO. 31

In 1983, there was a computer shop in Handyside arcade, Newcastle upon Tyne, that I used to visit on a weekly basis to see the latest games. One week I went in and saw *Jumpman* from Epyx playing on a C64 from a disk drive. This was in the days of waiting hours for cassette games to load and I was so taken by the game that I had to buy a disk drive just so I could play it. I was stunned by the gameplay involved in each screen and the subtlety that the programmer seemed to have put into each screen of the game. This was before the likes of *Manic Miner* and other platform games, so it seemed so sophisticated compared with the games that came before. Many a day was spent trying to master the game at higher and higher run speeds and I still look back on it with affection.

A BRIDGE TOO FAR OR MISUNDERSTOOD MASTERPIECE? WHATEVER YOUR OPINION ON SEGA'S FINAL FORAY INTO THE VIDEOGAME HARDWARE SCENE, THERE'S NO DENYING THAT THE DREAMCAST IS WORTHY OF A SECOND LOOK. JOIN LIFELONG SEGA FANBOY DAMIEN MCFERRAN AS HE TEARFULLY REVISITS ONE OF THE INDUSTRY'S MOST UNDERRATED CONTENDERS

Year released: 1998 (Japan), 1999 (US/Europe)

Original price: £200 (UK)

Buy it now for: £105+

Associated magazines: DC-UK, Official Dreamcast Magazine

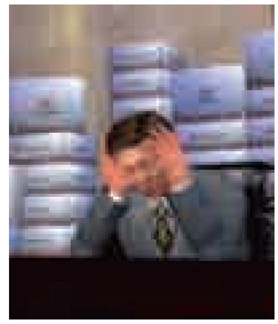
Why the Dreamcast was great… Sega's 128-bit console promised arcade-perfect gaming and the ability to go online for under £200. A flood of Sega classics followed and although Sony's PS2 was technically superior it took a while for it to catch up in terms of quality games.

Sega's Dreamcast holds a special place in the history of home videogame entertainment. It was an innovative beast, being the first 128-bit home console to offer online connectivity out of the box and setting the modern trend for sourcing internal components from PC manufacturers. It also proved to be Sega's last entry in the notoriously difficult hardware development race and brought an end to the days when arcade conversions sold consoles. Released in 1998 the ill-fated machine would be culled just three years later by a Sega undergoing seismic internal restructuring that would ultimately see the company emerge as one of the world's leading third-party software publishers.

The Dreamcast enjoyed a somewhat convoluted genesis. Back in the late-Nineties, Sega was still smarting from dismal hardware disasters such as the Mega-CD and 32X, and its Saturn console was losing the 32-bit war against Sony's PlayStation. As is usually the case when companies are against the wall, cracks began to appear inside Sega's corporate architecture. Newly appointed Sega of Japan president Shoichiro Irimajiri decided that the company's internal hardware development division was firing blanks and was determined to look elsewhere for the talent to create a new machine. This was not an entirely new stance; as early as 1995 there were rumours that the Japanese company would team up with aerospace firm Lockheed Martin to develop a new graphics processing unit (GPU), and while this proposed union came to nothing it set the wheels in motion for further excursions abroad in search of new hardware partners.

Around 1997 Irimajiri decided to enlist the services of Tatsuo Yamamoto from IBM Austin to work on a new hardware project. The idea was that the team would operate externally and therefore be unhampered by the internal politics that were pervading Sega's Japanese HQ at the time. Unsurprisingly, when Hideki Sato – head of hardware development at Sega Japan – caught wind of this he was less than happy and made it clear that any technical production should happen within the walls of Sega's Japanese HQ. This resulted in two different teams working in secrecy on two different prototypes in two different parts of the world.

'Black Belt' was the original codename given to the machine being constructed in the US, which was based around 3dfx Interactive's Voodoo 2 graphics technology. The Japanese counterpart was initially known as 'White Belt' (later 'Katana') and made use of NEC/VideoLogic's PowerVR2 chip. Both machines utilised 'off the shelf' central processors, with the American team picking the IBM/Motorola PowerPC 603e and their Japanese competitors favouring Hitachi's SH4. Ironically, despite Irimajiri's bold move of outsourcing development, it was Sato's team that ultimately won in the end with the 'Katana' prototype being selected as the basis



» Yukawa Hidekazu's tortured cameo in the *Shenmue* demo ended up being prophetic in ways Sega possibly didn't imagine.

INSTANT EXPERT

The PAL Dreamcast came with a lowly 33kps modem, but the US machine boasted a faster 56kps variant. Both were later superseded by a broadband adapter.

Sega never officially released the light gun peripheral in the US amid fears about the negative perception of gun crime at the time.

The rather limp UK advertising campaign didn't feature any videogame footage at all, instead relying on seemingly unconnected imagery and the vocal talents of Robbie Williams.

There is no reset button on the machine; instead users must press all the fascia buttons and the start button at the same time to return to the boot menu.

The Hong Kong/Asian edition of the machine did not ship with a modem; in its place was an empty, modem-shaped piece of plastic.

Sega had originally intended to place 8MB of RAM in the console, but it had to up this to 16MB when it found that graphical memory demands were higher than expected.

Shenmue is one of the few Dreamcast games to sell over a million units, yet its commercial performance was well short of expectations and the expensive project failed to actually generate a profit.

In Japan and the US the Dreamcast swirl is orange, but it had to be changed to blue in Europe due to a German company using the exact same logo.

In an attempt to battle the PS2, Sega Europe started bundling a DVD player with the Dreamcast for the same price as Sony's machine. The ploy wasn't a success.

Sega's final Dreamcast game was 2004's *Puyo Pop Fever*.

"SEGA'S DREAMCAST WAS AN INNOVATIVE BEAST THAT CONTINUES TO HOLD A SPECIAL PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF HOME VIDEOGAME ENTERTAINMENT"

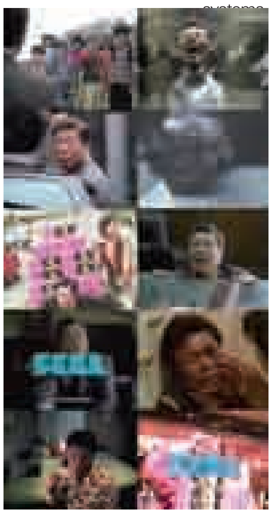
DREAMCAST



» Sega Japan's head of hardware development Hideki Sato.

ADVERTS

Now regarded as one of the most inventive and amusing advertising campaigns in videogame history, Sega of Japan's Dreamcast promotions were refreshingly self-deprecating. They featured real-life Sega managing director Yukawa Hidekazu getting in to all kinds of unpleasant situations as he dutifully attempted to make the fledgling console a success. The 30-second advertisements proved that not only did Sega have a sense of humour, but it was also willing to admit it had made mistakes with past hardware and that the Dreamcast represented a fresh start. The campaign was a tremendous success with Japanese audiences and Hidekazu became a star overnight; scenes from the adverts were plastered over the packaging of promotional consoles and the humble managing director even featured in the *What's Shenmue?* demo disc – sitting in a warehouse packed with unsold Dreamcast systems.





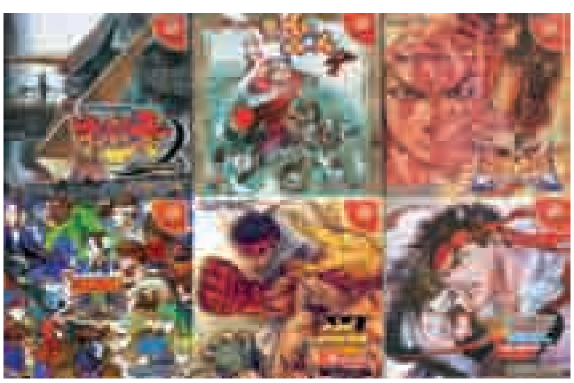
» Sega MD Yukawa Hidekazu and president Shoichiro Irimajiri hawk Dreamcasts on launch day.

for the new machine (naturally, rumours abound that Irimajiri's move was merely a bluff in order to give the Japanese hardware division a much-needed kick up the backside). A disgruntled 3dfx promptly sued for breach of contract, claiming that documents had been signed that stated that Sega would use its technology in the proposed 'Black Belt' concept for the new console (the first version of Metropolis Street Racer started development for the 'Black Belt' and Bizarre Creations even had a prototype of this hardware). The two projects, which had been kept top secret up until this point, were made known to the world thanks to 3dfx's lawsuit against both Sega and PowerVR2 manufacturer NEC. The former was reportedly furious about having its dirty washing aired so publicly and the legal impasse would later have to be settled out of court for an undisclosed sum. Needless to say, it marked an inauspicious start for the life of the new super console.

With the technology decided upon, the next step was to give the new project a name. With Sega's stock pitifully low, the company was well aware that any new machine would have to represent a new beginning and distance itself from the tainted public perception created by the poorly performing Saturn. To the Sega management, this meant one thing – completely remove the Sega name from the console and establish a new gaming 'brand' in the same way Sony had done with the successful PlayStation. According to reports, over 5,000 different names were considered, with the positive-sounding 'Dreamcast' winning out. A combination of 'dream' and 'cast' - as in the way a magician would cast a spell - this pleasant moniker hinted at the expanded connectivity the system would eventually bring to the home via its online services. Thankfully for fanboys, Irimajiri's management team would later wisely relent and permit the Sega logo to be reinstated to the console's outer casing.

> "SEGA PROVED HOW SERIOUS IT WAS ABOUT THE DREAMCAST… AS AROUND $500 MILLION WAS EARMARKED FOR THE DREAMCAST WORLDWIDE, WITH ROUGHLY HALF OF THAT FIGURE BEING SPENT ON CREATING THE HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE"

» Capcom provided sterling support for the Dreamcast. If you were a fighting game fan and owned the machine, then you were very happy indeed.



Internally the new system was a marvel of cost cutting, 'off the shelf' componentry – Sega had certainly learnt valuable lessons from the failure of the Saturn. The Dreamcast's 32-bit predecessor was badly hampered by high production costs and the complex nature of the hardware made it difficult for programmers to get the most out of the system. With Dreamcast, Sega made sure the console was cheap to manufacture by using parts more commonly associated with PCs. The motherboard was a masterpiece of clean, uncluttered design and compatibility, with Microsoft's Windows CE operating system meaning that development would be a potentially pain-free exercise (although it should be noted that in the long term, programmers favoured Sega's own development tools over Microsoft's). In order to keep costs down, the decision was made not to include a DVD drive, as the technology was still quite expensive at the time. Instead, Sega used its own proprietary GD-ROM format, which could store a gigabyte of data. Not including DVD compatibility would later prove to be a costly mistake.

If proof is needed to ascertain how serious Sega was about the new machine, one only has to look at the amount of money involved in designing, creating and marketing the console. Around $500 million was earmarked for the Dreamcast worldwide, with roughly half of that figure being spent on creating the hardware and software. The rest was splashed on promoting the machine all over the globe. Irimajiri, who found fame and fortune in the automotive industry with Honda, jokingly commented a few months before the Japanese release that the figures baffled him – car manufacturers would spend roughly the same amount on creating a new automobile, yet here was Sega throwing millions at the production of a diminutive box that sits under your TV. Nevertheless, Sega's Japanese president was well aware that this was the amount of capital it took to get a new machine on the shelves and into the consciousness of the consumer. The company knew that it would take something special to regain market share from the dominant Sony. "We have the strength of a beaten company," Sega's PR guru Yasushi Akimoto commented at the time. But for all this bravado, the new hardware launch was undoubtedly a huge gamble. The poor performance of the Saturn had pushed Sega into the red, and even before the Dreamcast hit store shelves in Japan the distressed firm had posted a shocking 75 per cent drop in half-year profits. With such a massive amount of money being devoted to doing battle in the console arena once more, the top brass at Sega knew that this could potentially be the last throw of the dice.

Nevertheless, as the console's Japanese launch grew ever closer there was a tangible sense of confidence in the Sega camp. Consumer interest was high and retailers reported that strong pre-orders were expected. However, this optimism was knocked slightly when NEC made the shock announcement that it was struggling with the manufacture of the PowerVR2 chipset. Issues were being encountered when the company mass produced the chip at the required 0.25 micron thickness (with one-in-three processors failing to meet production standards) and this invariably resulted in Sega



» Sega wasn't above taking cheap shots at its rivals, as this American advertisement proves.

GAMES LIVES

ALEXEY PAJITNOV (creator of Tetris)

Tetris



NO. 32

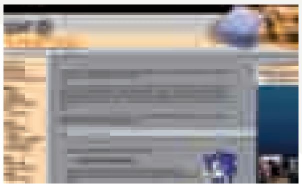
Tetris has been a big part of my life. It changed my life and meant I could do what I wanted to do, which was make games. The simplicity of the game was the attraction and that was important. People weren't very experienced and many were afraid of complex games. I made sure *Tetris* was easy to begin with and had a good introduction phase. I never thought it'd be as popular as it was, but I immediately realised it was good because I couldn't stop playing it myself.

COMMUNITY THE BEST DREAMCAST WEBSITES

PlanetDreamcast

www.planetdreamcast.com

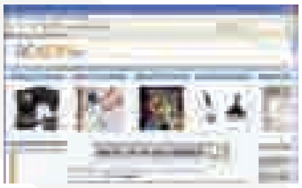
Affiliated with the IGN network, this is a great resource for all things Dreamcast related. If you're digging around for some decent software reviews or just want to get yourself acquainted with the history of the console, this should be one of your first ports of call.



DC News

http://dreamcast.dcemu.co.uk

Predictably most modern Dreamcast sites are concerned with emulation, seeing as many high-spec PCs can now comfortably pretend to be Sega's 128-bit machine. This site is an intriguing snapshot of what is possible when amateur coders really put some effort in.



Dreamcast-Scene

www.dreamcast-scene.com

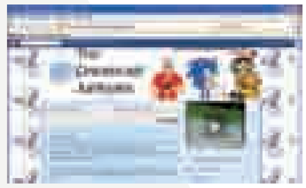
Another site with a heavy 'emu' bias (and we're not talking about that bird Rod Hull used to hang about with). However, there's lots of other interesting content on here too, as well as a nice community that is dedicated to keeping the memory of the machine alive.



Dreamcast Junkyard

http://the-dreamcast-junkyard.blogspot.com

A collection of (often-amusing) blog posts that deal with almost every aspect of the Dreamcast. Entertaining and passionate, it's also one of the few fan sites on the net that still gets regular updates and is well worth looking into.



having to halt Japanese pre-orders (which had reached around 80,000 by this stage) and reduce the projected number of units available at launch from 500,000 to 150,000. To make matters worse, several key titles such as *Sega Rally Championship 2* and *Sonic Adventure* were also hit by development delays.

The machine was finally launched in Japan on 27 November 1998 and the 150,000 available units promptly sold out before the day was over. In an eerie precedent to the Saturn launch four years earlier, the only title really worth bothering with on day one was *Virtua Fighter 3: Team Battle*. Unperturbed by the PowerVR2 production fiasco, Sega confidently predicted that it would sell half-a-million units by March 1999. When this target was missed and the news started to filter through that key software titles were failing to sell in the numbers expected (Capcom's stunning *Power Stone* was one high-profile commercial disaster, prompting a public apology from the developer, which wrongfully seemed to assume the end product wasn't up to scratch), those individuals inside the walls of Sega of Japan's boardroom started to worry. Prior to the Western launch the price of the Japanese console was reduced from ¥29,000 (£150) to ¥19,900 (£100), effectively removing all profit from hardware sales. The reduction had the desired effect and units started to sell in larger numbers, although this could have had something to do with the release of Namco's superlative *Soul Calibur*, which when confirmed as coming to Sega's 128-bit console caused a 17 per cent jump in the value of Sega's shares.

As the Dreamcast was struggling to maintain pace in its homeland, Sega's American and European divisions prepared to launch the console in their respective territories. The North American release occurred on 9 September 1999, with the European debut taking place just over a month later. The US launch was an astonishing success with Sega struggling to meet the initial demand for the product. Half-a-million Dreamcast consoles found their way into US homes in the first two weeks alone – something the machine had failed to do in several months in Japan. The company proudly boasted that it made $98 million on software and hardware sales thanks to the 9 September launch; by anyone's standards it was an amazingly successful introduction and ranks as Sega's most successful hardware launch in the territory. In Europe the figures made for equally encouraging reading; by Christmas 1999 half-a-million units had been sold meaning that Sega Europe was six months ahead of the schedule it had set itself.

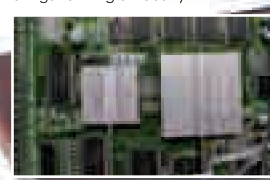


» *Shenmue* was arguably the most high-profile Dreamcast release and proved to many that the machine was a true next-generation proposition.

Given Sega's strong coin-op heritage, the Dreamcast unsurprisingly saw many arcade conversions during its life span. Shortly before the Japanese launch, Sega announced that it would be replacing its popular Model 3 arcade hardware with a new standard called NAOMI (New Arcade Operation Machine Idea). NAOMI and Dreamcast were essentially the same systems, with the former possessing twice as much RAM and four times as much sound memory. This meant that home conversions were more often than not exact replicas of what was seen in the arcade, and for the first time since the days of the Neo-Geo AES the term 'arcade perfect' actually meant what it said. A slew of Sega-produced arcade ports arrived including *Crazy Taxi*, *Outrigger*, *18 Wheeler*, *F335 Challenge*, *Dynamite Deka 2* and *Virtua Tennis*. Superb support also came from many leading Japanese arcade companies, most notably former Saturn ally Capcom, which not only released some excellent NAOMI titles (*Capcom Vs SNK*, *Marvel Vs Capcom 2* and *Project Justice* to name but three), but also

KEEPING COOL

Due to the raw power contained within the console it was deemed necessary to fit a cooling fan to keep the internal components from overheating. Sega even employed unique heat sinks to keep the main CPU and GPU chips from getting too toasty. This bizarre setup was rumoured to use liquid to carry heat from the chips to the fan using metal pipes via the principle of 'convection circulation'. However, before you excitedly go opening up your PAL machines in order to gaze upon this remarkable feat of technical engineering, it's worth noting that it was sadly only utilised in Japanese launch consoles, and we've only just discovered from an ex-member of Sega's PR that the presence of liquid inside the pipes was actually true. Manufacturing improvements meant that main chips generated less heat and therefore the internal fan proved to be more than enough to keep things running smoothly.





DREAMCAST

OTHER VERSIONS WHEN ONE MACHINE ISN'T ENOUGH

Divers 2000 CX-1

Shaped like Sonic's head, this all-in-one solution remains one of the most desirable pieces of Sega hardware. Bundled accessories included a keyboard, rumble pack and headset. It even had teleconference software and a remote for when you wanted to use it as a bog-standard TV.



Hello Kitty

Years before Nintendo cornered the female gamer market with the pink DS, Sega of Japan had been wooing young Japanese schoolgirls with this sickly sweet limited edition Dreamcast. Strictly limited to 2,000 units, many grown men hanker after this effeminate piece of hardware.



R7

The R7 was originally manufactured as a network console in pachinko parlours in Japan. Predictably many units have made it out 'into the wild' and into the hands of Sega collectors. The sleek black exterior reminds us of the Mega Drive, which is certainly no bad thing.



Treamcast

Not strictly an official hardware release, this Chinese modification was sold as a 'portable' solution for Dreamcast fans. Complete with a TFT screen and carry case, it offered incredible power on the move but unsurprisingly didn't trouble the established handhelds of the era.





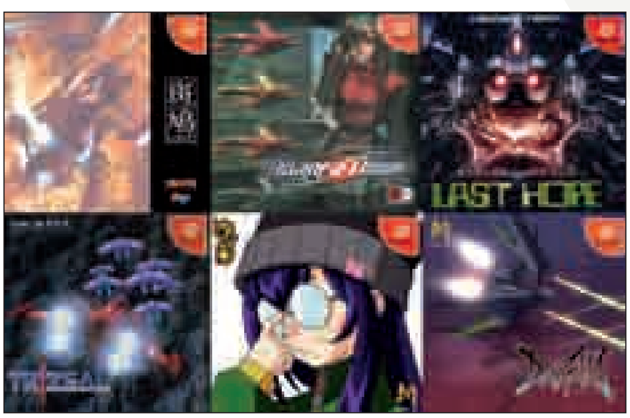
» Small but perfectly formed – the Dreamcast VMU was a neat idea, but never really made the impact it should have done.

seemed to release a new 2D fighter on an almost weekly basis, with titles like *Street Fighter III*, *DarkStalkers/Vampire Chronicle* and *Jojo's Bizzare Adventure* proving that Capcom was as serious about standing by the Dreamcast as it had been with the Saturn. Capcom offered another title for Sega's machine, a game that was arguably more important than any of its available fighters. *Resident Evil Code: Veronica* instantly caused a large amount of buzz for Sega's system, mainly down to the fact that the series, until that time had been entirely Sony exclusive. The game was eventually ported to the PlayStation2 and even Nintendo's GameCube as *Code: Veronica X*, but many fans feel the Dreamcast original was far superior.

Unfortunately, consolidating further third-party support wasn't going to be easy. Companies like EA had been burnt by the failure of the Saturn and ignored the Dreamcast throughout its life, choosing instead to stick with the far more profitable PlayStation (it was believed at the time that EA were offered favourable publishing

"THE THRILL OF PLAYING CRAZY TAXI IN THE ARCADE KNOWING FULL WELL THAT A PIXEL-PERFECT CONVERSION (AND NOT SOME CUT-DOWN PORT) WAS SET TO ARRIVE ON THE DREAMCAST IS AN EXPERIENCE GAMERS ARE UNLIKELY TO WITNESS AGAIN"

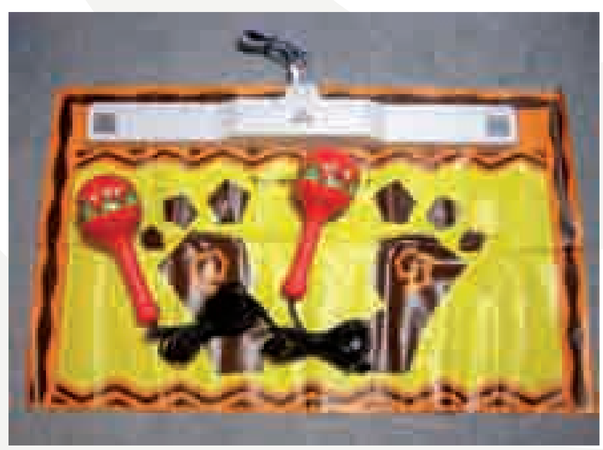
» These NAOMI-based shooters kept the console alive long after Sega had forgotten about it. Clockwise from top left: *Ikaruga, Border Down, Last Hope, Chaos Field, Radilgy, Trizeal.*



terms on the PlayStation2 if they didn't support the Dreamcast). Others adopted a cautious 'wait and see' policy towards the machine, commenting that they would review their stance when solid sales figures came through. Sadly, as positive as the Western launches had been, Sega struggled to keep the momentum going. With Sony's PlayStation 2 looming menacingly on the horizon many gamers decided to stick with their current machine rather than upgrading to the Dreamcast, and as a result interest started to wane. Price cuts, like the one witnessed so early on in Japan, predictably followed in the US and Europe but these failed to be a long-term solution to the problem.

Invariably, as sales began to diminish, more and more developers chose not to bring their products to the troubled console, and even those that had provided vital support began to lose interest. Namco – an essential partner and the company responsible for the system-defining *Soul Calibur* – dropped Dreamcast support almost as swiftly as it had taken it up. Therefore, throughout the life of the machine it fell to Sega to produce quality software, but while the company was undoubtedly adept at producing engaging coin-op experiences, it struggled to cater for a new audience of gamers that had been weaned on deeper, more feature-packed titles on the PlayStation. Sega's arcade ports were unquestionably arcade perfect, but in the eyes of many critics that was the problem – arcade machines are designed to entertain in short bursts and don't usually stand up to prolonged play within the home. Contemporary reviewers complained of lightweight coin-op ports and even the feature-rich world of *Shenmue* couldn't alter the often-erroneous perception that the Dreamcast was a machine packed with arcade titles that failed to keep your attention for more than a few hours.

Dreamcast's ace in the hole – online connectivity – could have arrested such a sorry slide, but Sega never really managed to exploit this facet to its fullest potential. The company was unforgivably slow in getting it to the consumer and while the actual service was up and running from day one and boasted internet access and email connectivity it was let down by the software getting constantly delayed. When the promise of playing against 'six billion players' (a rather lofty boast made by Sega Europe, which seemingly assumed that everyone on the face of the planet would buy a machine) finally



» Predating the Wii by a fair few years, the motion-sensitive maracas for *Samba De Amigo* brought joy to many a Sega fan – it's a shame the PAL release was so cripplingly limited.

WALTER DAY

(judge and founder of gaming records website Twin Galaxies)



NO. 33

None

The future holds the most significance for me. The evolution of gaming has hardly begun. Technology, bandwidth and interconnectivity will allow anybody and everybody to compete against each other – no matter where they are. Also, the cyberspace, which presently only encompasses the space found on the screen of the gamer's computer, will extend into the real world and the player will become immersed in the cyber environment.



» The proposed Dreamcast Zip drive – sadly it never made it onto the shelves.

came to fruition, it was found to be quite underwhelming due to the slow speed of the bundled modem.

When the PlayStation 2 launched in March 2000 after a series of troublesome delays, it became obvious that the writing was on the wall for Sega's 128-bit challenger. Ironically, the PS2's initial line-up of software was arguably inferior to what was being released on the Dreamcast at the time, but Sony's brand was so strong it sold on the name alone. In the US, the Dreamcast was given a shot in the arm as Sega announced that it would grant a $150 rebate – basically the price of a Dreamcast system – to anyone who signed up to the SegaNet service for two years. Another price cut followed and these two manoeuvres resulted in an astonishing 156 per cent rise in hardware sales. However, it's always worth looking at the bigger picture when quoting numbers like these; the Dreamcast still only held around 15 per cent of the US gaming market, with Sony and Nintendo out in front with 50 per cent and 35 per cent respectively.

Sega was in dire financial straits before the Dreamcast arrived, but its disappointing performance meant the company was in even more trouble. It clearly couldn't continue and although the announcement in 2001 that Sega would be discontinuing Dreamcast production and moving into third-party publishing came as a shock to hardcore fans, most industry experts had been predicting the move for months beforehand. Sega was quick to point out that games were still in development for the Dreamcast, but for all intents and purposes the Japanese firm had taken its eye off the struggling system and was looking very much to the future.

However, the Dreamcast's connection with NAOMI proved to be a crucial lifeline. The arcade system was incredibly popular and Japanese coin-op developers, finding their earnings diminishing as the industry began to shrink, gladly took up the low-cost solution that NAOMI provided. Over the next few years these companies would keep the memory of the Dreamcast alive with a series of shooting titles that, after successful arcade runs were granted small-scale domestic releases. Titles such as *Radilgy*, *Trizeal*, *Under Defeat* and *Trigger Heart Exelica* all found their way onto the system, and G.rev's *Border Down* was so highly sought after that it recently received a welcome reprint. Homebrew shooter *Last Hope* was released in 2007 and is (at the time of writing, at least) the last Dreamcast game to receive moderate media attention.

Pinpointing exactly why the Dreamcast failed is trickier than you might imagine. Was it lack of third-party support? Overreliance on arcade conversions? Poor support of online services that could have set it apart from its rivals? Lack of a DVD drive? The impending release of the PS2? Poor marketing in key territories? The most likely answer is that it was a combination of all these factors, but when dissecting the troubled history of the console it's easy to overlook just how potent a gaming platform it was. The thrill of playing *Crazy Taxi* in the arcade knowing full well that a pixel-perfect conversion (and not some cut-down port) was set to arrive on the Dreamcast is an experience gamers are unlikely to witness again. Rudimentary as it was, online play with a console was nothing short of revolutionary at the time, and Sega basically offered access to the internet for under £200 – something that PCs of that era were asking an awful lot more for. With titles of the calibre of *Rez*, *Jet Set Radio*, *Daytona USA*, *Dead Or Alive 2*, *House Of The Dead 2* and *Skies Of Arcadia*, the Dreamcast was unquestionably heaven for videogamers that appreciated the finer things in life. Sadly, out of those 'six billion' potential players that Sega spoke about, the message only seemed to get through to a lucky few.



» TThe unique (not to mention disturbing) *Seaman* made use of the Dreamcast microphone.



» The NAOMI arcade hardware was essentially a Dreamcast with more memory

EVERYTHING BUT THE KITCHEN SINK

The range of peripherals available for the Dreamcast is nothing short of staggering. As well as the usual arcade stick controllers and dedicated 'fighting type' joypads there was an updated version of the Saturn's Twin Stick controller (for mecha-fighter *Virtual On*), a steering wheel, rumble pack, keyboard, fishing rod, camera, microphone and motion-sensitive maracas (for *Samba De Amigo*, naturally). Possibly the best-known addition to the Dreamcast stable was the Visual Memory Unit (VMU for short), which stored saved game data and acted like a small console when separated from the Dreamcast itself. Sega had audacious plans for this glorified memory card (as did Sony with its PocketStation), but battery life wasn't perhaps as good as it could have been and anyone who has owned a Dreamcast will be all too aware of the painfully annoying beeping tone a battery-less VMU makes whenever the console is switched on.





» People may have questioned the design of the Dreamcast but it could have been much worse, as these prototypes attest

DREAMCAST

PERFECT TEN GAMES

There are far, far too many great Dreamcast games, so here's a quick roll call of the other titles that just missed our list. Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike, Sega Marine Fishing, Jet Set Radio, Border Down, Power Stone 2, Castle of Shikigami II, Crazy Taxi and Cosmic Smash. So many amazing games, so little space.



01

SOUL CALIBUR

» **RELEASED:** 2000
» **PUBLISHED BY:** NAMCO
» **CREATED BY:** IN-HOUSE
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** PAC-MAN

01 **While Street Fighter** *III: 3rd Strike* is easily the superior fighter, we've given the beat-'em-up slot to *Soul Calibur* because Namco went above and beyond the call of duty with its actual conversion. Unlike Capcom's *3rd Strike*, *Soul Calibur* offers all the amazing playability and gameplay of the arcade original, but enhances it by delivering a truly staggering additional mode that increases the longevity no end. As well as delivering some truly spectacular visuals, *Soul Calibur* upped the ante on the Dreamcast by offering a whole host of console-exclusive extras including the fantastic Mission mode and more unlockables than you could imagine. Little wonder then that it went on to sell over a million copies.

SAMBA DE AMIGO

» **RELEASED:** 2000
» **PUBLISHED BY:** SEGA
» **CREATED BY:** SONIC TEAM
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** NIGHTS INTO DREAMS

02 **The Dreamcast featured** an astonishing range of peripherals during its release, but none could match the sheer magnificence of *Samba De Amigo*. Essentially a port of the popular arcade game and coming with a set of maracas, *Samba De Amigo* is an excellent rhythm-action game that had players shaking the maracas in a frenzy, as they matched the on-screen prompts. With its gaudy visuals and brilliant tunes that ranged from Quincy Jones' *Soul Bossa Nova*, to a bizarre take on A-Ha's *Take On Me*, *Samba De Amigo* proved utterly essential, even if the original package saw little change from 100 notes. Fans may wish to seek out the Japanese-only add-on *Samba De Amigo Version 2000*.



02

RESIDENT EVIL CODE: VERONICA

» **RELEASED:** 2000
» **PUBLISHED BY:** EIDOS
» **CREATED BY:** CAPCOM
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** POWER STONE

03 **Capcom's fourth Resident** *Evil* title caused quite a stir on its release. Mainly because it was the first time the franchise wouldn't be debuting on a Sony console, but also because it was the first game in the series to use proper 3D backgrounds. Spread over two discs and focusing on the exploits of Claire and Chris Redfield, *Veronica* moves away from Racoon City and focuses on a small island owned by the Umbrella Corporation. Granted, its gameplay is almost identical to the original *Resident Evil*, but it's saved thanks to far more impactive cut-scenes and a shockingly good storyline.

IKARUGA

» **RELEASED:** 2002
» **PUBLISHED BY:** ESP SOFTWARE
» **CREATED BY:** TREASURE
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** GUNSTAR HEROES

04 **There's a slew** of great shoot-'em-ups on the Dreamcast, but not one of them can touch the sheer elegance of *Ikaruga*. The first of many 'last ever' Dreamcast releases, *Ikaruga* expanded on the duality themes that Treasure explored with *Silhouette Mirage* by having your ship flip between two polarities. While you could absorb bullets that were the same colour as your ship, enemies succumbed quicker to opposing coloured fire, which presented a superb risk-and-reward system. Add in its complex chain system and Treasure proved that when it comes to high-quality shooters, its pretty much untouchable.

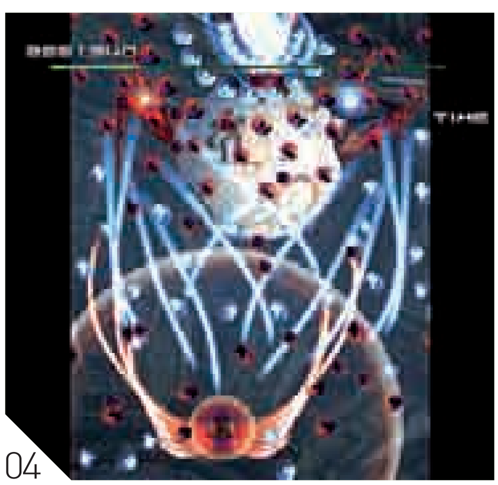
METROPOLIS STREET RACER

» **RELEASED:** 2000
» **PUBLISHED BY:** SEGA
» **CREATED BY:** BIZARRE CREATIONS
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** GEOMETRY WARS: RETRO EVOLVED

05 **We recently sung** *MSR*'s praises in our top 25 racers, but this innovative racer is so special we're going to mention it again. Part simulator, part arcade racer, *Metropolis Street Racer* was essentially the forefather to the now-popular *Project Gotham Racing*, and delivered a driving experience that few other games of the time could match. With its excellent handling, well-constructed tracks and inventive Kudos system, *MSR* was a welcome alternative to Sega's hardcore racers that were available on its system and proved that Dreamcast owners had little need for Sony's *Gran Turismo*.



03



04



05



GAMES THAT CHANGED LIVES

ALEX VERREY (AKA 'BIG BOY BARRY')

(global PR and communications manager – Mad Catz, Inc)

Sonic The Hedgehog (Mega Drive)



NO. 34

My gut reaction was to nominate *Mario 64*, but I can't proclaim that it changed my life. I thought about giving the nod to *Hungry Horace* for the Speccy 48K, but again I'm not sure if it qualifies for 'changing life' status. In the end, the title I settled upon was *Sonic The Hedgehog* for the Mega Drive. Some may view it as an odd choice, but Sonic truly did change my life, for that was the game I was asked to play on the second-ever episode of GamesMaster. After mastering Green Hill Zone to collect 180 rings, I secured my Golden Joystick, which I guess was the birth of Big Boy Barry. One could say that I owe my career to Sonic, therefore if ever a game could truly be said to have changed my life, Sonic would be it.



06



07



08

SHENMUE I & II

» **RELEASED:** 1999, 2001
» **PUBLISHED BY:** SEGA
» **CREATED BY:** IN-HOUSE
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** SPACE HARRIER

06 Okay, so we're cheating here, but you really can't talk about Yu Suzuki's highly acclaimed game without including its incredible sequel. Greatly revered and reviled in equal measures, the *Shenmue* franchise cost Sega millions to make, while *Shenmue II* remains its most requested game. Huge in scope and with an incredibly complex narrative – that annoyingly, has yet to be completed – the *Shenmue* franchise delivered an experience that no other game of the time was able to match. After all, here was a series that not only allowed you to visit an arcade and play many of Yu Suzuki's past hits, but was even able to make menial tasks like working enjoyable.

SEAMAN

» **RELEASED:** 1999
» **PUBLISHED BY:** SEGA
» **CREATED BY:** VIVARIUM
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** ODAMA

07 Sega's Seaman isn't really a game as such, but that doesn't mean that you should miss out on this incredibly clever piece of software. Narrated by Leonard Nimoy, *Seaman* requires you to raise the titular character from an egg to a fully grown adult, and saw you raising and coaxing the creature via Sega's Microphone peripheral. Despite never receiving a UK release, we urge you to track down the US version and a boot disc so that you can experience this utterly bizarre creation for yourself. If you need further insight into *Seaman*'s strange world visit Lofarius's current diary at www.rllmukforum.com/index.php?showtopic=179577.

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

» **RELEASED:** 2000
» **PUBLISHED BY:** SEGA
» **CREATED BY:** SONIC TEAM
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** SONIC ADVENTURE

08 Falling asleep at your keyboard was a common experience in *Phantasy Star Online*. It wasn't due to it being boring, but because it was so damn addictive. Never mind that level grinding was a chore or that phone bills could constantly run into three-digit numbers, Sonic Team had created a world that was so imaginative you couldn't stay away from it. Incredibly basic when compared to recent offerings like *World Of Warcraft*, it's easy to forget what an impact it made on its release and just how successfully Sonic Team had evolved the franchise from its RPG roots.



09

SKIES OF ARCADIA

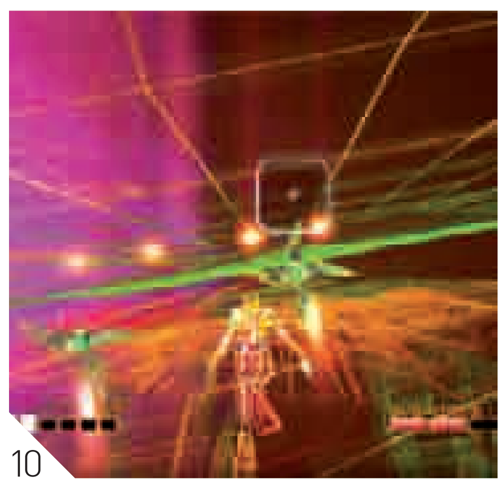
» **RELEASED:** 2000
» **PUBLISHED BY:** SEGA
» **CREATED BY:** OVERWORKS
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** SHINOBI

09 We absolutely adore *Skies Of Arcadia*. The score is sweeping and magnificent, the world you explore is incredibly huge and full of mystery. Add to this the fact that each and every character you meet is larger than life in a way that only the best RPGs can manage, and you have yourself a beautifully immersive title. Following the story of a young air pirate called Vyse, *Skies Of Arcadia* is a wondrous adventure that's set in a Jules Verne-inspired world where islands float in the sky and flying ships are the main form of travel. While *Skies Of Arcadia* follows the well-trodden path of many other games in the genre, it has been put together with so much passion and love that you can't help but fall in love with it.

REZ

» **RELEASED:** 2001
» **PUBLISHED BY:** SEGA
» **CREATED BY:** UNITED GAME ARTISTS
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** SEGA RALLY

10 Alright, so the frame rate is lower than its PS2 counterpart and the lack of built-in vibration hurts it somewhat, but there's no denying that *Rez* on the Dreamcast remains an utterly compelling experience. Arguably one of the greatest contenders for those many 'Are videogames art?' discussions, *Rez* pushes boundaries and mixes gameplay, sound and vision in a way that few other titles have been able to manage. Beautifully abstract and boasting the sort of creative gameplay that matches its truly astonishing aesthetics, *Rez* is just as much an experience as it is a game and is further testament to just how innovative and imaginative Sega once was. A truly stunning game that needs to be in every Dreamcast owner's collection.



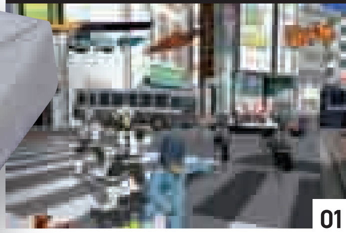
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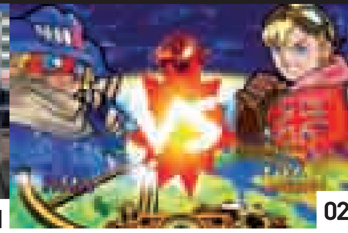


01 JET SET RADIO
02 POWER STONE
03 COSMIC SMASH
04 VIRTUA TENNIS
05 BANGAI-O
06 CRAZY TAXI
07 F355 CHALLENGE
08 STREET FIGHTER III: 3RD STRIKE
09 GAROU: MARK OF THE WOLVES
10 RE-VOLT
11 SKIES OF ARCADIA
12 GRANDIA II
13 CHUCHU ROCKET!
14 BOMBERMAN ONLINE
15 MARVEL VS CAPCOM 2: NEW AGE OF HEROES
16 SOUL CALIBUR
17 EVIL TWIN: CYPRIEN'S CHRONICLES
18 SPACE CHANNEL 5
19 SONIC ADVENTURE 2
20 VIRTUA FIGHTER 3TB
21 ECCO THE DOLPHIN: DEFENDER OF THE FUTURE
22 REZ
23 OOGA BOOGA
24 VIRTUAL ON: ORATORIO TANGRAM
25 PROPELLER ARENA
26 TOY COMMANDER
27 SHENMUE
28 CASTLE SHIKIGAMI 2
29 COOL COOL TOON
30 STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3
31 THE LAST BLADE 2
32 SAN FRANCISCO RUSH 2049
33 VAMPIRE CHRONICLE
34 MARS MATRIX
35 GIGA WING 2
36 POWER STONE 2
37 WORMS ARMAGEDDON
38 DEAD OR ALIVE 2
39 CANNON SPIKE
40 THE KING OF FIGHTERS: DREAM MATCH 1999
41 BORDER DOWN
42 ALIEN FRONT ONLINE
43 STUPID INVADERS
44 GUILTY GEAR X
45 PSYVARIAR 2
46 BLUE STINGER
47 JOJO'S BIZARRE ADVENTURE
48 TRIZEAL
49 FUR FIGHTERS
50 CAPCOM VS SNK
51 CHAOS FIELD
52 FIREPROWRESTLING D
53 WETRIX+
54 TRIGGERHEART EXELICA
55 IKARUGA
56 SONIC SHUFFLE
57 CONFIDENTIAL MISSION
58 THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2
59 SEGA BASS FISHING
60 SONIC ADVENTURE
61 FLOIGAN BROS
62 WACKY RACES
63 MORTAL KOMBAT GOLD
64 D2
65 ILLBLEED
66 PHANTASY STAR ONLINE
67 TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2
68 READY 2 RUMBLE BOXING
69 EVIL DEAD: HAIL TO THE KING
70 GAUNTLET LEGENDS
71 4X4 EVOLUTION
72 AEROWINGS
73 BUST-A-MOVE 4
74 VIRTUA STRIKER 2
75 DYNAMITE COP!
76 THE TYPING OF THE DEAD
77 GRAND THEFT AUTO 2
78 SILENT SCOPE
79 HEADHUNTER
80 NFL 2K2
81 HIDDEN & DANGEROUS
82 RESIDENT EVIL 3: NEMESIS
83 NHL 2K
84 QUAKE III ARENA
85 INCOMING
86 HYDRO THUNDER
87 FIGHTING FORCE 2

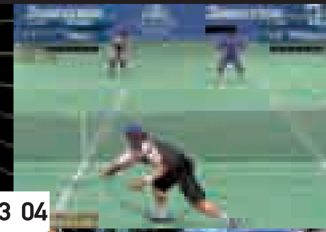
DREAMCAST and the rest...

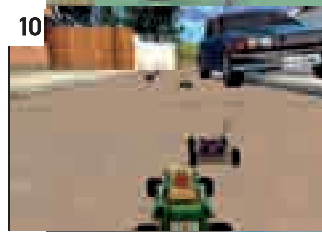
While the Dreamcast boasted some truly excellent arcade ports, there was plenty more to Sega's machine than just the latest Sega release. It's a truly wonderful machine and it makes us sad to think that it will probably remain Sega's last console

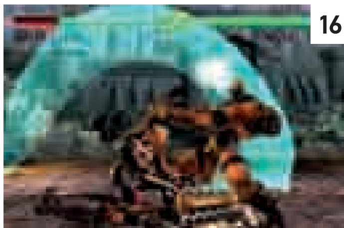

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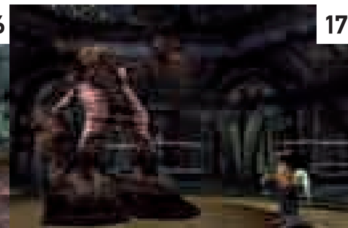

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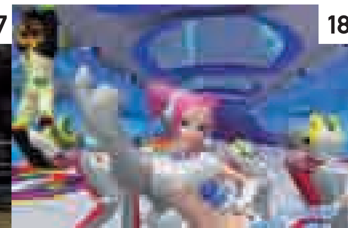

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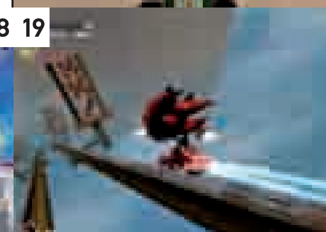

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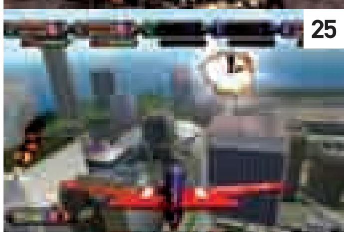

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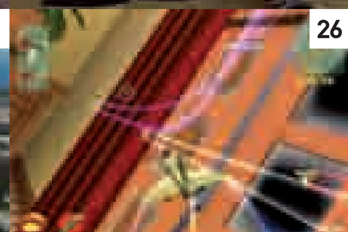

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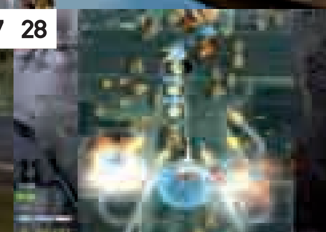

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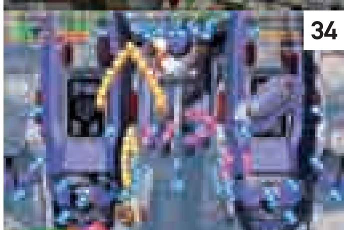

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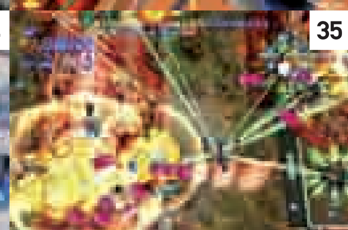

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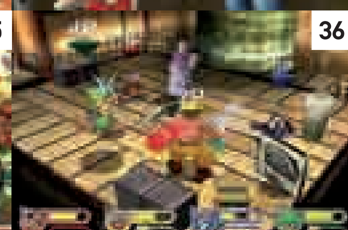

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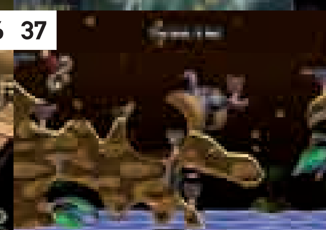

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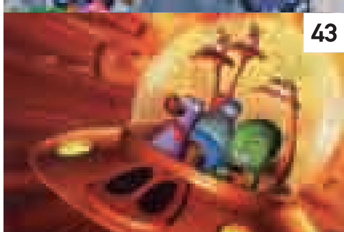

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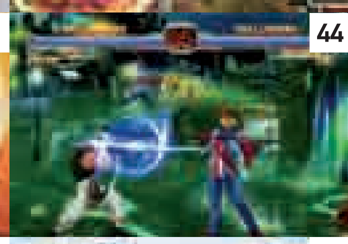

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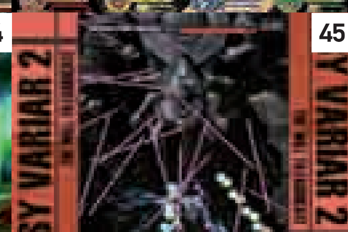

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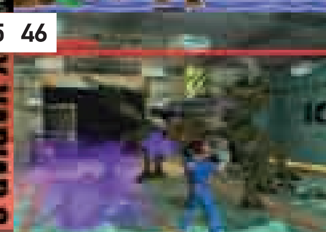

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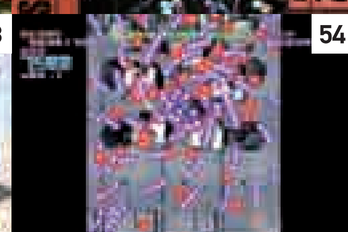
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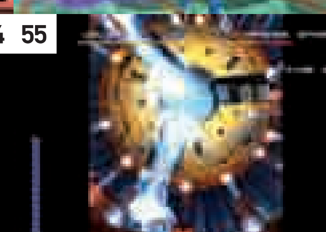

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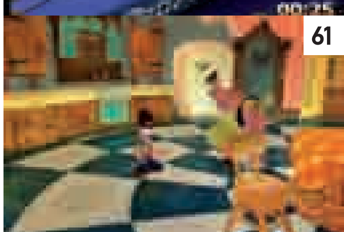

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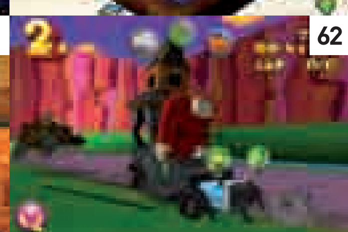


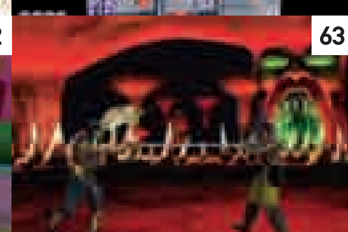
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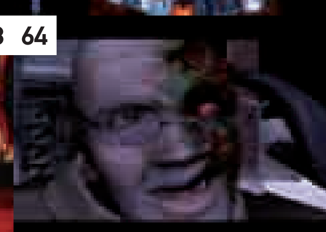

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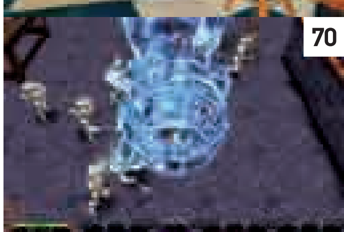

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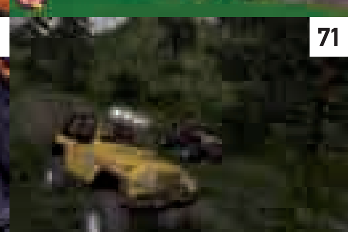

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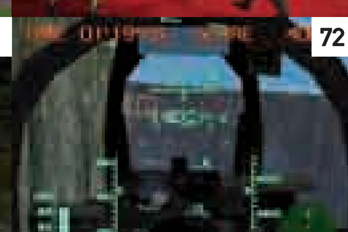

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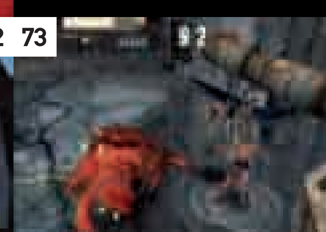

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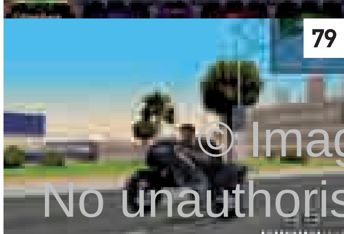

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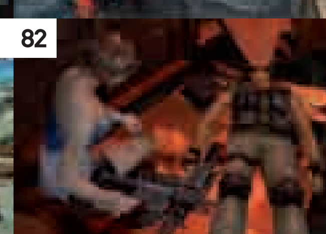

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LIVES

ANDY COOK (art director at the Microprose UK Studio and lead artist on the Geoff Crammond F1 games)

Grand Prix II (PC)

NO. 35

I'd go to work each day not believing my luck at being paid to work on the best F1 game with artists as creative as those at Microprose and a developer as talented as Geoff Crammond. It was still a time when a major project could be created with a very small art team, encouraging us to turn our hands to many different areas. At the end of the project I really felt I'd made a very significant contribution, meaning that if I hadn't worked on it, it wouldn't have turned out the same. That's a level of job satisfaction I'd never achieved with any previous company and I knew I'd found my vocation.





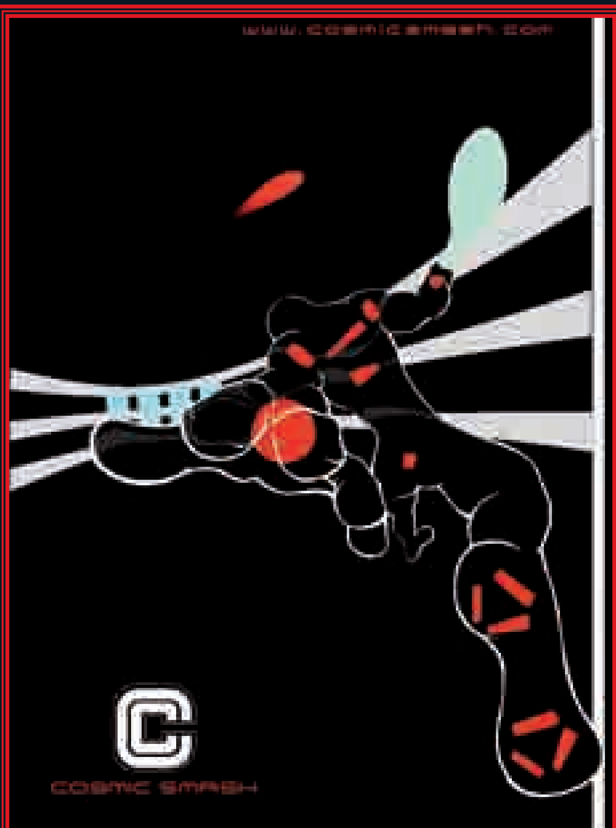
DREAMCAST GALLERY



Power Stone Year Released: 1999



Crazy Taxi Year Released: 1999



Cosmic Smash Year Released: 2001



Gauntlet Legends Year Released: 1998

NO. 36

ED LOGG

(ex-Atari programmer and creator of Asteroids)



Space War (PDP-1)

I played *Space War* in 1971. This was my first true videogame and I played it later when it was set up as a two-player coin-op. In 1978 when I was asked to do a game based on shooting rocks in space, this game probably made me decide to use XY vector technology. Of course, this game was Asteroids. I met a woman in 1988 who had bought a full-sized Asteroids coin-op. I was introduced by a friend with the suggestion of autographing her machine, but we have been together ever since. So this game has meant more to me than a professional job well done. It has taken me down a career and life path.



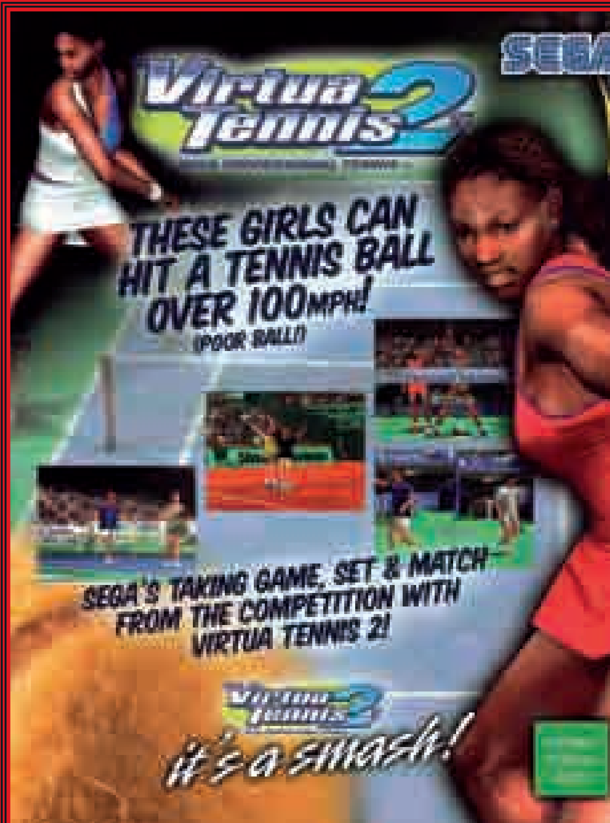
Get Bass: Sega Bass Fishing Year Released: 1998



Hydro Thunder Year Released: 1999



Marvel Vs Capcom 2: New Age Of Heroes Year Released: 2000



Virtua Tennis 2 Year Released: 2001

SILKWORM

TECMO, TECMO, TECMO, TECMO!



» **PUBLISHER:** VIRGIN
» **RELEASED:** 1988
» **GENRE:** SHOOT-'EM-UP
» **FEATURED HARDWARE:** CPC, C64, ZX SPECTRUM
» **EXPECT TO PAY:** A FEW QUID

HISTORY



Pitting you on a perilous mission to thwart a mechanised army of tanks, tripods and missile launchers, as 8-bit co-op shooters go, it doesn't get much better than Tecmo's vehicle buddy-cop shmup *Silkworm*.

On this mission you could opt to take to the skies inside a futuristic chopper or traverse a rocky road in a jeep. And if you were practising to be ambidextrous you could even try your hand at controlling both at once. Those lucky enough to have friends, of course, could load the game up and really experience the true charms of *Silkworm* – its brilliant co-op mode.

As the jeep was the slightly more exposed vehicle, it would often depend on the chopper's secondary weapon to help get it out of trouble. *Silkworm* also had a cool twist to power-ups. Shooting at the enemy mines on the ground caused a cluster of stars to float up into the sky. If you flew your iron bird into them a shield would smother it, but if you blasted the stardust it would cause the screen to clear of enemies in a flash.

Boot the game up today and despite its good looks, it becomes clear that *Silkworm* was a repetitive little blaster. Every mission had you chugging past the same formations of bullet-spitting enemies before you encountered a strange midway boss that looked like a metal dinosaur. If you were skilled enough to pump enough lead into the sucka, the level would continue until a repeating boss was reached – an enemy that would rotate from a large helicopter, which would prove a headache to blast if you were the jeep.

Silkworm began life in the arcades and boasted some really solid arcade conversions. While the Amiga would benefit an almost perfect port, as this collection of 8-bit screenshots proves, the 8-bit micros would certainly do us proud in their own unique ways. The CPC port was glorious to look at, the Spectrum port was brilliantly smooth, and the C64 proved a good all-rounder. The game looks great across the board and looks even better when it's running – those silky animated explosions still impress, even today.



GAME THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

DAVID AMOR

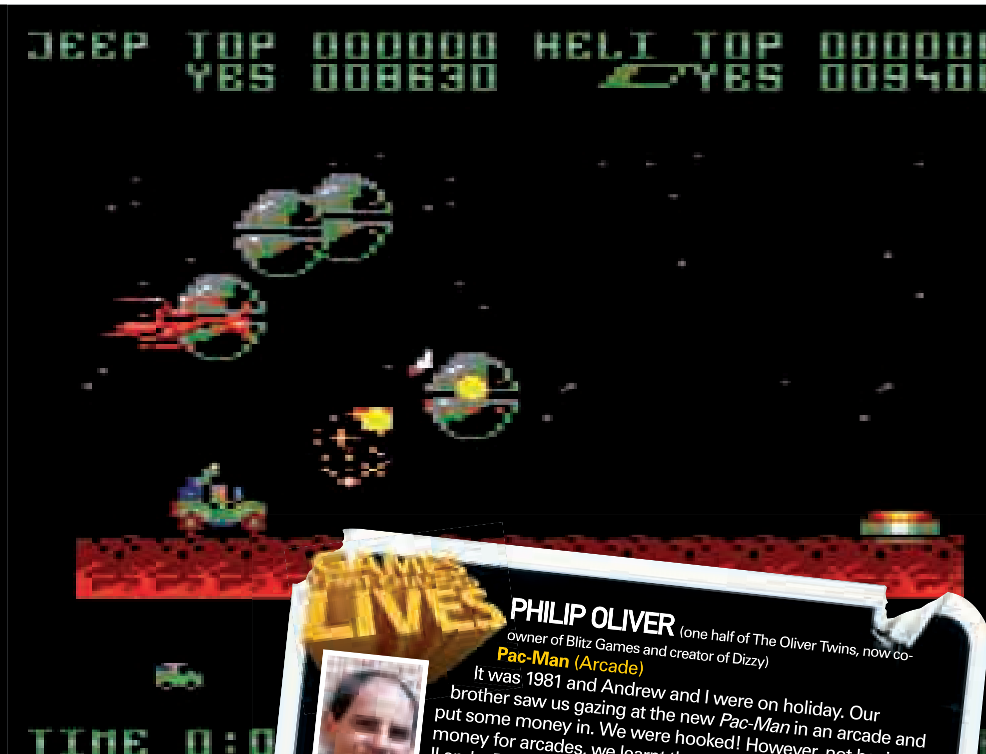
(creative director at Relentless Software)

Super Mario Bros (NES)

In the late Eighties, I started working at a videogame publisher that had a NES and *Super Mario Bros*. I'd played it in the arcades, but now I had it on free play I started to obsess about it. At the weekend I took it home and plugged it in. Sadly, the console was NTSC so I could only glimpse Mario in black and white. Then I remembered that an ex-girlfriend's brother got a PAL version for Christmas. As I drove to her house, I knew it was a bad idea. As the door was answered by her parents I realised this wasn't showing me in a good light, nevertheless I begged to borrow the NES. That taught me how addictive a good game could be.

NO. 37





NO. 38

PHILIP OLIVER

(one half of The Oliver Twins, now co-owner of Blitz Games and creator of Dizzy)

Pac-Man (Arcade)

It was 1981 and Andrew and I were on holiday. Our brother saw us gazing at the new *Pac-Man* in an arcade and put some money in. We were hooked! However, not having money for arcades, we learnt that a friend's dad had an Apple II and a Pac-Man clone – that autumn we played it every night. After this we got a computer and started writing games. Then, 25 years on, we were awarded the contract by Namco to make the 25th Anniversary version of Pac-Man – something I was very proud of.







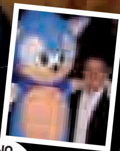


PAINTING





LIVES JOHN BROOMHALL
(former head of audio at MicroProse)
Wolfenstein 3D (PC)



NO. 39

Wolfenstein 3D changed my world and my perspective on games and gaming. Back in the Nineties, my game audio world was one of synthesised sound effects and music playing on an FM sound card. So with its digital samples, however primitive, *Wolfenstein* scared the pants off me – soldiers screamed and guard dogs snarled. It was repetitive, but it hit the right spot. For the first time, I was drawn into and immersed in a virtual world.

WORLDS

An interview with Roger Dean

DESPITE PUSHING PAINT RATHER THAN PIXELS, ROGER DEAN CREATED SOME OF THE MOST RECOGNISABLE ARTWORK OF THE 16-BIT GAMING ERA. CRAIG GRANNELL CAUGHT UP WITH ROGER TO TALK ABOUT HIS PAINTINGS, IDEAS AND DESIGNS AS HE WAS PUTTING THE FINAL TOUCHES TO A RETROSPECTIVE BOOK ABOUT HIS LIFE'S WORK

Hundreds of artists have created artwork for classic videogames, but few have struck the imagination like Roger Dean. His instantly recognisable hyper-realism added extra pulling power to Psygnosis games, already bolstered by that company's obsession with high-end production values. However, unlike many of his contemporaries, Roger didn't come to prominence during the videogames boom of the Eighties and early Nineties – instead, his education two decades earlier led him down a path that initially concentrated on design.

Roger studied at Canterbury School of Art and the Royal College of Art in London. As his education began, Roger remembers colleges moving away from teaching art in an academic fashion, but his industrial design course remained committed to offering a disciplined approach to drawing. Therefore, Roger became well versed in perspective, shadows and hand-drawn lettering – all essential to his later career. "I was lucky to have a discipline-intensive training," he says. "With art, unless you actually do it, you won't become skilled. And while it's neglected today, the process of training the hand is critical, because the training of the hand leads directly to the training of the mind."

Soon after graduation, Roger became associated with the music industry, via a combination of interest and accident. His furniture designs – notably the sea urchin chair – were getting publicity, and he was approached to do work for a club belonging to Ronnie Scott. "That was great, because it meant I was in touch with people in the music industry," says Roger. Album covers were painted for Gun and Osibisa, before Roger's long-standing relationship with Yes began, with artwork for 1971's *Fragile*.

Although Roger enjoys working on album covers, he dismisses the notion that the music ever affects his work. "I think it enormously pretentious and nonsense when artists claim they paint music," he says. "It's like painting smells and things – it's not something you can set out to do with any degree of reality." Instead, Roger says ideas arrive from within himself and from each band's verbal ideas about their music. "With Yes, the cover always had to be finished long before even rough mixes were available," explains Roger. "It wasn't a practical proposition for the band to finish an album, and then for me to listen to it and paint."

PLAYING THE GAME

Along with the Yes covers, printed compilations of Roger's work (1975's *Views* and 1984's *Magnetic Storm*) and the sale of millions of posters cemented Roger's notoriety. After the publication of his second book, his otherworldly, moody landscapes came to the attention of people in the burgeoning British games industry. Eager to capitalise on Roger's reputation and take advantage of his ability

Incredibly alien, the creatures Roger created for *Shadow of the Beast* still give us nightmares.





to create great artwork (rare on videogame covers of the time), Imagine Software suggested collaborating.

Imagine's bankruptcy a few months later meant that Roger never created anything for the Merseyside operation, but seeds had been sown: Psygnosis rose from Imagine's ashes, and Roger began a six-year partnership with the company, crafting for it a visual identity unique within the industry. "I did the name and the logo," says Roger. "They kept throwing names at me and wanted something that said 'knowledge', 'the future', 'wisdom' and 'fun' [laughs], and so the owl was the obvious choice." Roger reckons the 'robotic' owl was possibly a means to combine and promote 'wisdom' and the futuristic angle, and says the name literally incorporates knowledge. "In Psygnosis, the 'nosis' part means knowledge [laughs]… It's really just a fake word," Roger explains, "but it carries a sense of being about technology, knowledge, wisdom and the future!"

Elsewhere, Roger was invited to illustrate Psygnosis's range of games, squarely aimed at the then-cutting-edge 16-bit platforms, and taking full advantage of the technology on offer. First up was *Brataccas*, a game supposedly derived from the much-hyped, unreleased *Bandersnatch*, a Spectrum-based mega-game that almost single-handedly took down Imagine Software. "In those days, the propaganda was that we were making interactive movies," jokes Roger. "Today, you might just be able to call a game an interactive movie, but back then, they



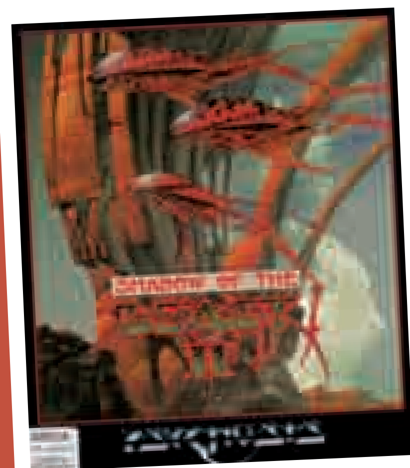


A HIDDEN SECRET

During the Nineties, Roger worked on the ill-fated, as-yet-unreleased *Secret Of The Black Onyx*. "Henk Rogers had huge success with *Onyx*, and decided to do *Black Onyx* with modern technology," explains Roger. Four teams worked on it, Roger's being involved with content, including scripts, music, animation and art.

Despite a gestation period of several years, the production never surfaced. "It's heartbreaking that it never saw the light of day, because what everyone did was very good," says Roger. Although the game has been "in the freezer" for a decade, Roger thinks it might yet appear in some form: "The technology is no longer relevant, but much of the stuff we did is still pertinent – the art, the music and so on."

Very little of the game is available in any form online, but scouring YouTube unearthed a short promotional video, which you can visit at www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGjUi6RyrMQ.



(Far left) Roger created some beautifully distinctive artowrk for *Shadow of the Beast*, which was repeated (above) for the extremely popular sequel.

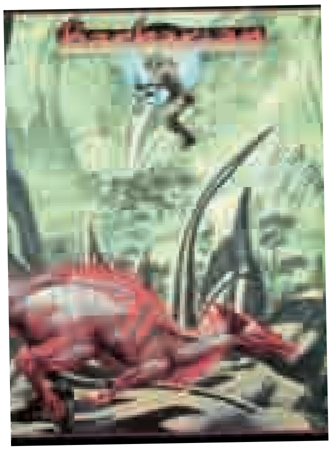


LORNE LANNING (game designer, director)
Prince Of Persia (various)

NO. 40

I've always been inspired by those early games that drew us in with their stories and characters. Games like *Out Of This World* and *Flashback* made us feel like we were playing living characters. *Prince Of Persia too* – that was an inspiring game. Then the fully visualised world of *Myst* showed us that film-like production quality could be a draw in itself. I wanted to bring those lifelike characters, with relevant stories, into fully realised worlds that could sustain some degree of disbelief and wonder. It was games like these which led me to create *Oddworld*.

were full of little matchstick men, although I can understand why everyone was so excited about those early days of gaming."

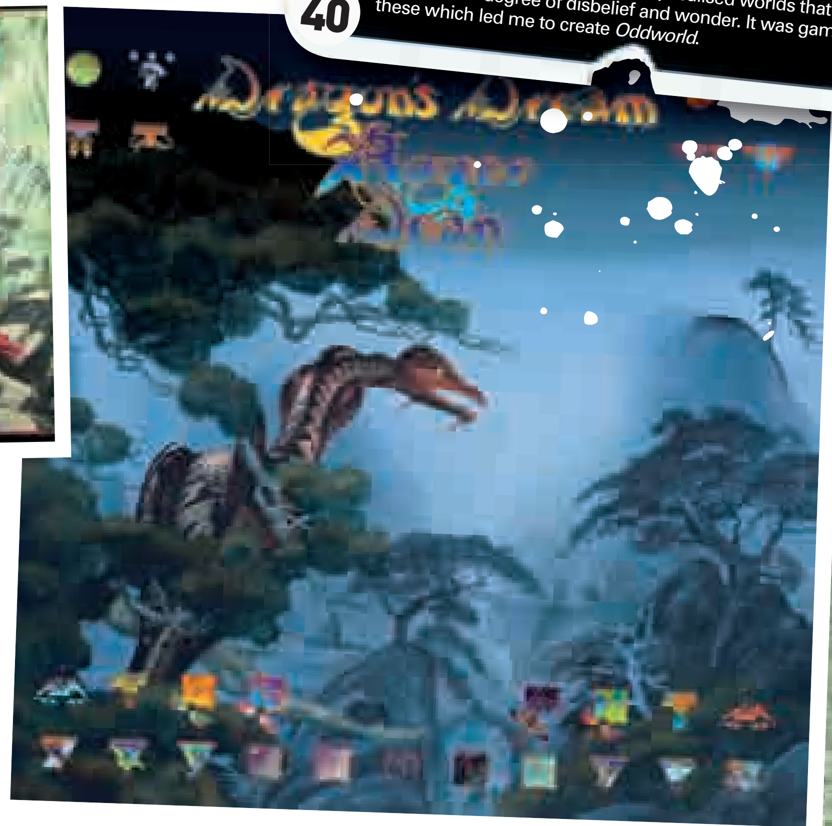


ENTER THE DRAGON

Although the *Brataccas* cover included typically Roger Dean lettering, the minimal, gloomy, stark artwork was somewhat at odds with Roger's lush album covers. However, with 1987's *Barbarian*, he returned to his trademark organic output, creating a videogame cover that to this day remains his clear favourite. "I had a bunch of ideas, but wanted to work in a totally different way," recalls Roger, when we ask how the painting came to be. "The way I normally work is to do a little doodle, work out the design of a painting, and put detail in… work out the elements. I started doing that with *Barbarian*, but although I had lots of details, I hadn't got them together as a painting."

Initially, the piece was extremely abstract, with "lots of globs and squiggles", and it wasn't even apparent which way up it was supposed to be. Roger also found its palette challenging, due to an emphasis on colours not usually considered attractive. "But I gradually teased the details out of it, and it slowly became this strange landscape," he says. "However, there's no way it could have been planned – it had to have come out of the paint and be eased out of the swirl and colours."

The final *Barbarian* artwork, which includes a detailed red dragon darting rightwards, became a fan favourite, and was included in *Barbarian*'s box in poster form. If any criticism can be levelled at it, it's that the art isn't remotely descriptive of the game. In fact, remove the logo (created and



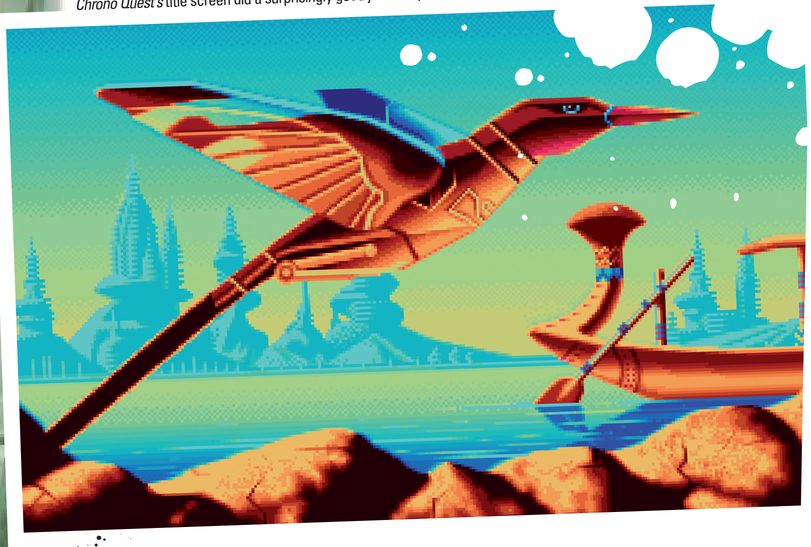
"WITH BARBARIAN, ROGER DEAN CREATED A COVER THAT TO THIS DAY REMAINS HIS CLEAR FAVOURITE"

added by Roger), and there's almost no connection to the game at all. Unsurprisingly, Roger confirms that – as with his album covers – a game's content rarely influenced him. "But this was because I had the same problem as with the music," he argues. "I'd be doing packaging for a game which was, at the most, at a conceptual level, and had no opportunity to look at it before I started. Some games weren't finished for months or years after I started…"

Roger adds that while you could have a reasonable stab at when a band would finish an album, game development was – and still is – far less predictable. "I do understand why the criticism came about, though," he admits. "If you buy an album, you don't expect to play something that will generate my paintings, but someone buying *Barbarian* might expect the game to reflect the cover, and when it doesn't, that's not truly fair." He considers that while this was more acceptable back then – Roger's artwork hardly being alone in taking liberties with in-game content and concepts – he doesn't think it would be today. "It would be very odd now to imagine doing packaging for a game where I didn't do the content, except for something like *Tetris*, where the content isn't in any way illustrative," he says.







Chrono Quest's title screen did a surprisingly good job of capturing Roger's original art.

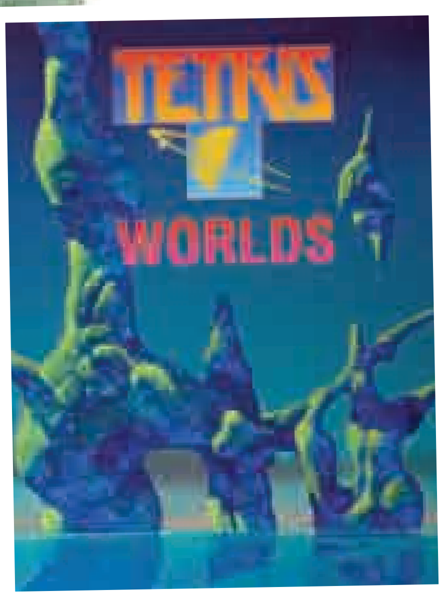


The game may divide opinion, but there was no denying the brilliance of *Shadow of the Beast's* visuals.

THE BEAST WITHIN

Covers for a slew of creations followed, mixing science-fiction themes with Roger's penchant for organic landscapes, a combination perhaps best realised in the stunning artwork for *Shadow Of The Beast*. We ask Roger about that composition's genesis, and he's not sure which piece we mean. A quick description follows – an orange-brown background, two strange creatures running about the place: a bipedal thing with a spiky back and something akin to a cross between a lion and a metal gazelle. "It's funny you should say that, because I thought of them both as dogs," laughs Roger, subsequently remembering how that particular painting was a struggle. He far prefers the work he did on the sequel. "I like the clarity and simplicity of the painted background, and the menace of the flying… guard dogs… Well, you can't call them dogs any more…" Roger pauses. We proffer that they look like 'flying frog fish'. "They do have a frog-like quality," he agrees.

It seems a good time to talk about the inspiration behind Roger's unique, otherworldly creations, and he says all his creative activities come from ideas deep inside. The process, he explains, is always one of allowing them out: if enough raw material is put into the system, and you need an idea, you step back and allow it to appear. "That's why the phrase 'let's sleep on it' has such resonance," he claims. "It's because whether you do actually sleep on it or not, giving your mind a rest is what produces ideas or allows them to come forward, often fully fledged." Perhaps surprisingly, though, given the characters and landscapes within Roger's art, everything is nonetheless grounded in reality. "For almost every landscape I've painted, including the floating rocks I've done so often, I can say where they came from in the real world. It's about taking reality as a launch pad for ideas," he says.



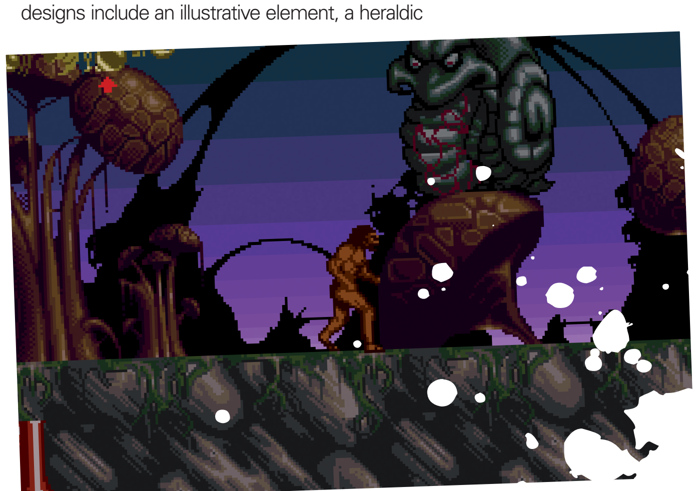
A LOAD OF OLD BLOCKS

When Sony swallowed up Psygnosis, Roger and the software company parted ways, but that wasn't the end of his work in the games industry. Instead, another long-standing partnership began – one that survives to this day. "It was exciting to be involved with Psygnosis, but it dawned on me that although I was there to do logos and packaging, I could have made a hell of a difference to the actual games," says Roger. The opportunity for more direct involvement arrived when Roger began working with Henk Rogers, first on *Secret Of The Black Onyx* (see 'A Hidden Secret' boxout) and then on *Tetris*. "I designed the new *Tetris* logo a long time ago, and very little of my work has appeared. It's backing up a lot, and so I think you'll soon start seeing what I designed for it several years ago," begins Roger. "But how I went about it… I usually divide logos into three areas: the silhouette, the heraldic element and the lettering. But *Tetris* in and of itself is astonishingly

> "SHADOW OF THE BEAST'S STUNNING COVER MIXED SCI-FI THEMES WITH ROGER'S ORGANIC LANDSCAPES"

bland as a graphic source: four square blocks in various configurations! You can't get simpler and blander, and so it was a massive challenge."

Roger's solution was to create a very simple logo – the 'T' for *Tetris* – but allow each version of the product to be defined by a logo that could have varying heraldic, silhouette and lettering elements. "Because of the constraints I was first put under, the early *Tetris* things had another name, so they'd be a subdivision – Tetris Zone or Tetris Battle – but my more recent designs include an illustrative element, a heraldic



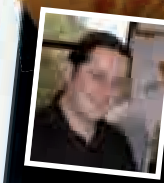
Shadow of the Beast II retained the original's excellent visuals but greatly improved the gameplay.

GAMES THAT CHANGED LIVES

MARTYN CARROLL

(first editor of Retro Gamer)

Resident Evil (PlayStation)



Resident Evil got me back into gaming. I was into games as a kid, but when the new Amiga releases dried up I drifted away. But a few years later I got a job in a video shop that hired out PlayStation consoles and games. Some kids had been in, raving about *Resident Evil*. I borrowed the shop's PS and a copy of the game, and it knocked me sideways. I started playing games again, and then writing about games which led to a career as a games journalist. I've never looked back, not even to check if the zombies are gaining on me.

NO. 41



The box art of *Terrapods* in all its organic glory.

A BRUSH WITH FAME

We assumed Roger Dean's videogame artwork made liberal use of airbrush, but that's not the case. "It's funny, because when I did the work that most looks airbrushed, I couldn't afford an airbrush, so I used aerosols and enamel, but just for backgrounds," begins Roger. "When I could finally afford an airbrush, I stopped using one, but people remained adamant that my work showed good use of airbrush technique!" Absurdly, Roger was even presented with an award by an airbrush magazine, and the work cited, as far as he was aware, didn't utilise airbrushes at all.

These days, Roger's more concerned with large canvases, rather than intricate airbrush work. "As you get older, your eyesight goes," he says. "Once I got to 40, I didn't have the patience for magnifiers and other paraphernalia needed for very intricate compositions, and so I moved to much bigger paintings, typically six-by-four feet."



element, and a piece of lettering, and they've really come into their own. They're some of the strongest pieces of design I've done, and so I hope you'll get to see them eventually…" He pauses. "Well, you'll get to see them in my new book [laughs], but whether the games will be out by then…"

END GAME

Although logos remain a part of Roger's remit, covers are a different matter. "I see the future far more in content than covers," he explains. "These days, my role is in concept planning, although when I'm painting for myself, I obviously do the concept, planning and execution." We start to draw the interview to a close. Roger expresses some major concerns about the highly flawed Gowers Review recommendations having the potential to destroy copyright protection for individual artists, talks a little about his forthcoming book, and becomes rather vague when we ask about upcoming videogaming work. However, he does mention a major upcoming project with Henk Rogers and California-based Virtual Space Entertainment, for which Roger created a number of Yes-style landscapes.

We press him for a little more information, and Roger pauses, before saying, "It's coming out of an area that is really hard to define… I mean, would you call Second Life a game?" What we're talking about, we suggest, is virtual worlds, and it is rather fitting that for someone who has spent a large part of his life creating worlds in paint, Roger Dean is now helping to craft digital worlds that people can become truly immersed in.

Thanks to Roger Dean (rogerdean.com), Jools Smyth (exotica.org.uk, bitworld.bitfellas.org) and Kim Lemon (lemonamiga.com) for supplying artwork used in this feature.

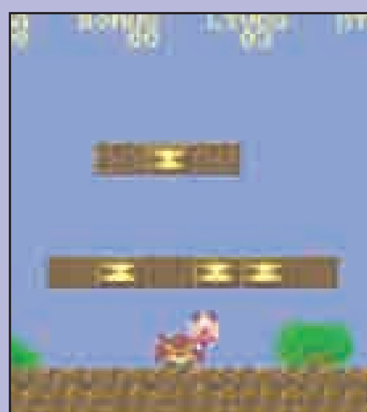
Roger Dean's book, Dragon's Dream, is due for release in September, and includes sketches and artwork created for Psygnosis, Bulletproof Software and Blue Planet Software.

THE MAKING OF…

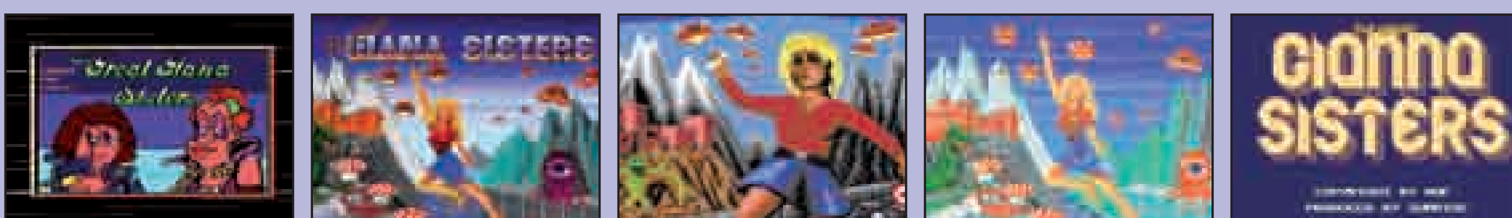
THE GREAT GIANA SISTERS

Rainbow Arts modelled its classic 8 and 16-bit platformer on one of the most successful console games of all time, but then it got rumbled and its game was pulled from shelves quicker than you could say lawsuit. Darran Jones charts the creation of two platforming sisters. Just don't tell Nintendo…









» Here's the loading screens for all five released versions. While the MSX version (far right) is little more than text, it's still a lot better looking than that atrocious Amstrad art (far left).

IN THE KNOW

- » **PUBLISHER:** RAINBOW ARTS
- » **DEVELOPER:** TIME WARP
- » **SYSTEMS:** C64, AMSTRAD CPC, AMIGA, ATARI ST, MSX, SPECTRUM (UNRELEAED)
- » **RELEASED:** 1987
- » **GENRE:** PLATFORM
- » **EXPECT TO PAY:** £10+

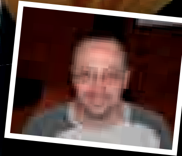
During the late-Seventies and early-Eighties, clones of popular arcade games were rampant and they quickly began to spread to home computers like a cancerous growth. *Krazy Kong* was a surprisingly good ZX81 clone of Nintendo's *Donkey Kong* and was also the name of an unofficial bootleg of the very same arcade game, *Snapper, Munchman, Hangly-Man* and *Munchkin* were direct rip-offs of Namco's *Pac-Man*, while *Super Invaders, Cosmic Monsters, Space Attack* and *Space King* were spin-offs of Taito's *Space Invaders*.

In the early days of videogaming, many of these clones were left to leech off the arcade originals, growing increasingly fat off the efforts of the original creators. They even proved to be easy calling cards for fledgling developers – Geoff Crammond and Jon Ritman, for example – who were eager to break into the industry. Occasionally, however, these games came under fire, with their creators having to face copyright violation lawsuits and having to pay the consequences. Sometimes just being threatened was enough, as Manfred Trenz discovered when *The Great Giana Sisters*, a game he'd been working on with Armin Gessert, faced the wrath of Nintendo due to it being a little too similar to one of the Japanese giant's most popular games.

Super Mario Bros was one of Nintendo's biggest titles and was helping the Japanese publisher to grab a lucrative slice of the Western gaming market. With its slick scrolling, myriad of secrets and superb level design it proved to be in a totally different league to many computer platformers of the time and gamers were going absolutely nuts for it.

Eager to grab a slice of the *Super Mario Bros* pie, the then CEO of Rainbow Arts, Marc Ulrich, saw Shigeru Miyamoto's creation and immediately hatched a plan. "When he saw *Super Mario Bros*, he became very excited about it," recalls Trenz. "Since there was no game like it available on home computers at the time, he saw a chance

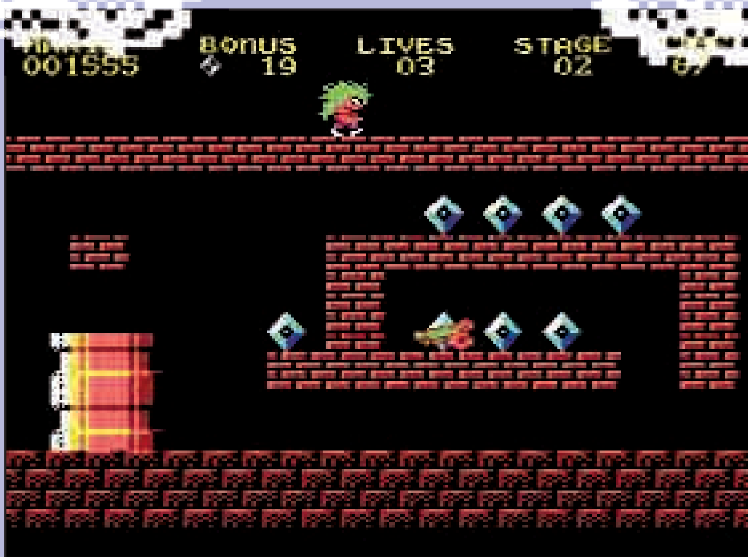
PAUL CARRUTHERS
(veteran independent developer)



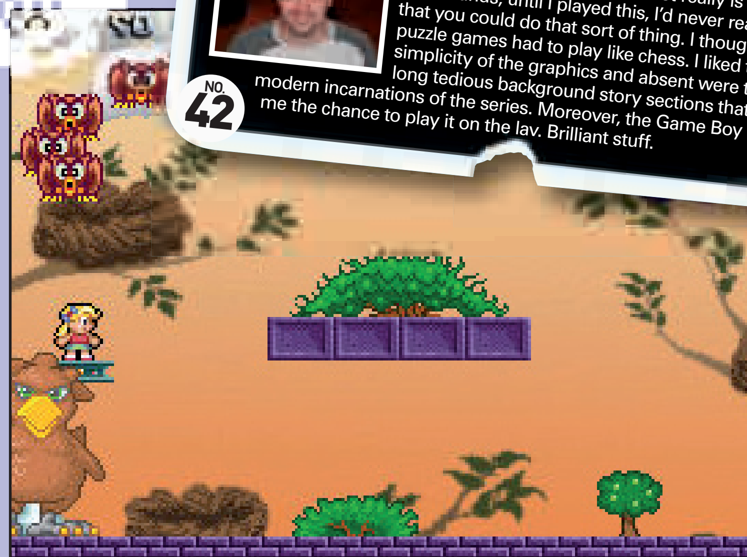
Legend Of Zelda: Link's Awakening (Game Boy)

Like a mini Trojan horse, *Zelda* hides hardcore puzzles inside an RPG, but it's not really is it? Funny as it sounds, until I played this, I'd never realised that you could do that sort of thing. I thought puzzle games had to play like chess. I liked the simplicity of the graphics and absent were those long tedious background story sections that blight modern incarnations of the series. Moreover, the Game Boy gave me the chance to play it on the lav. Brilliant stuff.

NO. 42



» [C64] While it's possible to run along the top of the screen here, don't expect it to lead to a secret warp area.



» [Dreamcast] *Giana's Return* has been in development for a while, but beta versions are available on Dreamcast and Windows.

for a successful game to be made using very similar game mechanics."

A team was quickly assembled, consisting of Trenz, who'd create the game's distinctive visuals; Armin Gessert was hauled in for programming duties (he ended up coding everything with always more interested in games like *Defender*, to be honest."

Despite Trenz's general apathy for the game, Ulrich was determined that he should be on board the project and, with a team in place, Ulrich's next step was to secure an actual Nintendo NES

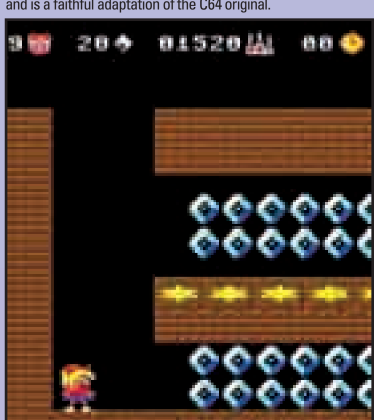
> "TRENZ HAD TO CREATE A TITLE THAT WAS RECOGNISABLE AS SUPER MARIO BROS, BUT NOT ENOUGH SO THAT IT WOULD CAUSE TROUBLE FOR RAINBOW ARTS"

the exception of the high-score routine, which was handled by Trenz), while legendary C64 musician Chris Hülsbeck handled the excellent theme tune.

Interestingly, despite the sterling job Trenz did with capturing *Super Mario Bros*' distinctive look he admits to never being a big fan of the actual game.

"I saw the PlayChoice arcade version before I saw the actual NES game, but to be honest, I was never really interested enough to play it. I never even bothered with *Donkey Kong*, which was the first game to actually feature Mario. I was

» **[Mobile]** Originally released in 2005, *Giana Sisters* was a mobile phone game by Gessert's Spellbound Entertainment and is a faithful adaptation of the C64 original.



and a copy of the popular platformer. Nowadays it's common practice for coders to have direct access to original arcade code when they're working on conversions, but back in the early days it was an entirely different matter. Programmers would usually be supplied with nothing more than an actual arcade machine and a lot of ten pences, and intensive playing became the only way of accessing a game's secrets. Unsurprisingly, when Trenz and Gessert finally received their console the approach they had to take was no different. There was no backwards engineering involved and certainly no help from Nintendo, just a hell of a lot of playing and note taking.

"The NES was installed with *Super Mario Bros* and we had to play it over and over and over again to understand how the game worked and was put together," continues Trenz. "Eventually, I ended up seeing everything the game had to offer. Even now, providing I have lots of time and very good nerves, it's possible for me to beat *Super Mario Bros* without cheating."

Charged with creating both the game's look and its level design, Trenz soon realised that he was in a very delicate position, as he had to create a title that was immediately recognisable as *Super Mario Bros*, but not enough so that it would cause potential trouble for Rainbow Arts. As a result, the creation of many aspects, such as the layout of stages and the main character, took Trenz and Gessert a fair amount of time to perfect, meaning their game wasn't fully completed until a good six to seven months of hard graft had been put in.

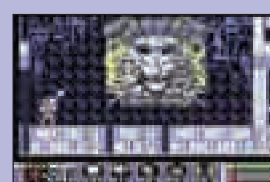
"I did have complete freedom of choice when it came to designing the levels but the 'management' had a constant eye on the graphical style. It had to be very similar to *Super Mario Bros*," continues Trenz. "Yes, the graphical style was copied, but I did go out of my way to ensure that all levels were originally designed. I also found creating the main character [Giana] to be quite a hard task. It took me a very long time to find out the best look for her. I had lots of different variations but there always seemed to be something missing. It just took a really long time. So long, in fact, that practically every two weeks the management would be asking:

DEVELOPER HIGHLIGHTS

KATAKIS
SYSTEMS: C64, AMIGA
YEAR: 1988

R-TYPE
SYSTEMS: VARIOUS
YEAR: 1988

TURRICAN (PICTURED)
SYSTEMS: VARIOUS
YEAR: 1990



» [Amiga] Collect 100 diamonds and you'd earn yourself an extra life. Hmmm, wonder where that idea came from…



THE MAKING OF... THE GREAT GIANA SISTERS

OUT OF THIS WORLD

Rainbow Arts may have had its critically received game scuppered by Nintendo, but that didn't stop *The Great Giana Sisters* receiving a sequel. However, it was a rather low-key and many gamers didn't even realise that the two games were actually related. *Hard 'N Heavy* was released in 1989 for the Commodore 64, Atari ST and Amiga and was markedly different from Trenz and Gessert's original game. To avoid any more potential issues with Nintendo, *Hard 'N Heavy* featured a spaced-theme scenario that was a world away from the Day-Glo colours of *Great Giana Sisters*, and the two wild-haired girls now wore spacesuits which made them completely unrecognisable. Many elements from the previous game still remained though. Blocks could still be busted, but doing so was now achieved with bullets instead of noggins, while collecting 100 gems still awarded you with an extra life. The floaty controls that made *Giana* stand apart from *Super Mario Bros* were also evident, although they felt far more suited to *Hard 'N Heavy*'s otherworldly environments. Contrary to popular belief, Trenz had no involvement in the game.







» One of these games is *Super Mario Bros*, the other is *The Great Giana Sisters*, can you tell which is which?

'What the hell are you doing? Show us something!'"

Hassle from upper management continued, and Trenz found even the most straightforward of tasks, like creating a flashy title screen, became increasingly difficult. "I ended up having to draw three different title pictures in the end," recalls Trenz as he looks back at the constant scrutiny that their game was under. "The first one was deemed to be far too cute, the second one was apparently far too gloomy and it was finally the third effort that ended up satisfying the management."

To try to distance Rainbow Arts' creation from Nintendo's, Trenz took out the familiar mushrooms and Koopas and other enemies in the game and replaced them with non-offensive-looking enemies, such as giant ants and other cute creations. Although some of them still looked remarkably similar to the original enemy sprites.

"I thought it would be incredibly cheeky to simply copy the enemies exactly as they were in *Super Mario Bros*, so I decided to invent as many new and funny ones as possible." Trenz's insistence on trying to make the game his own can also be seen whenever one of the sisters gobbles up the power-enhancing sweets that litter *Giana*'s many levels. Whenever Mario munches on a mushroom he grows in stature and his new power is easy to convey, with the sisters though, they simply grew new spikey haircuts. This wasn't down to machine limitations, however, but was another conscious decision on the part of Trenz. "It was simply a technical thing," he explains. "If I had gone and created another large sprite we would have been directly copying a feature exactly as it had appeared in *Super Mario Bros*."

Having to placate upper management's desire for an identical *Super Mario Bros* clone and wanting to create something that felt sufficiently different were the least of Trenz's problems, however, mainly because *Giana*'s distinct visuals had to be created from less than sufficient art tools. "Because there were no real tools available at the time, I simply had to make do with an existing tile creator that someone had created so I could build the graphic sets, and it proved to be a real pain to use. All the actual enemies ended up being simply placed in by hand."

As work began to wind up, focus turned over to what the game would actually be called. "Well, we wanted the name to sound similar to *Super Mario Bros*, but nevertheless be a little different," confirms Trenz. "We decided on the following: 'Super' became 'Great', 'Mario' became 'Giana', while 'Brothers' would obviously turn into 'Sisters'."

When *Great Giana Sisters* was eventually released it was to a fair amount of critical acclaim, particularly on the Commodore 64, which many still argue is better than the Amiga and Atari ST versions (no one ever mentions the CPC offering as it's utter tripe). Indeed the C64 version managed to notch up a particularly impressive 96% from *Zzap64!* that went on to call it, "A fabulous, compelling and constantly rewarding arcade adventure."

Rainbow Arts had achieved its goal and quickly pushed the game onto retail shelves. While Trenz was more than happy with the German box art, which mimicked his original loading screen, he wasn't at all impressed with the punk look that ended up on the UK release. "I really didn't like it. It just looks too strange to me and Giana looks like some kind of Miss Piggy."

Nintendo was also unhappy with *The Great Giana Sisters* and an injunction

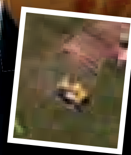
» [C64] Chris Hülsbeck's music would often change depending on what level you were on. Unsurprisingly, every tune was excellent.



NO. 43

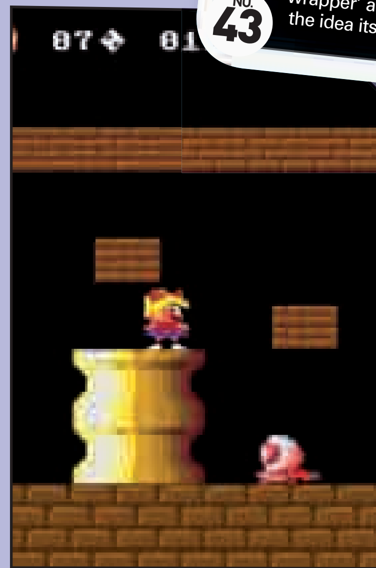
MARTYN CHUDLEY (MD of Bizarre Creations)

Blast Corps (N64)



Blast Corps taught me important lessons in game design. It shows how a simple principle can make a truly addictive and compelling game. Unfortunately, it also taught us how it takes more than just great game design to sell a game. Without compelling marketing, a fabulous Game Rankings score can mean nothing in the commercial world. *Blast Corps* was an important lesson to me in ensuring the 'wrapper' and commercial appeal of a game is as important as the idea itself. It's still bloody brilliant though!





» [C64] Giana could smash blocks just like Mario, but unlike the plumber she didn't actually grow in size.

YOU'RE SO FIRED!

While regular readers will know that we're huge fans of Sir Alan Sugar's Amstrad CPC, even we're appalled by the god-awful conversion of *Giana* that appeared on our favourite computer. Whatever you do, don't under any circumstances play this sorry excuse for a game. It's an utterly abominable creation that boasts irksome controls, absolutely horrendous looking visuals and appears to have been coded by someone who was simply watching over the shoulder of whoever was playing the C64 original. Add in the fact that there's not a smidgen of sound and that the loading screen boasts the same gruesome art that appeared on UK posters and *The Great Giana Sisters*' fate is sealed.



"TO TRY TO DISTANCE RAINBOW ARTS' CREATION FROM NINTENDO'S, TRENZ TOOK OUT THE FAMILIAR MUSHROOMS AND KOOPAS AND REPLACED THEM WITH NON-OFFENSIVE-LOOKING ENEMIES"

was taken out against Rainbow Arts' game. Rumours persist that the original injunction came about because a Nintendo representative had seen the game at a trade show and reported it, but Trenz isn't so sure. "I don't really recall who was actually responsible for the injunction, but placing the slogan 'The Brothers are history!' on the box certainly couldn't have helped."

Within a week of actually going on sale, *The Great Giana Sisters* was quickly pulled from UK shelves, and a similar pattern followed in the rest of Europe. Rather than fade into obscurity, Nintendo's injunction simply made the game even more desirable. "The reaction was really enthusiastic in Germany," remembers Trenz. "Even though everybody knew it was a 'copy' of *Super Mario Bros* it didn't seem to matter. It wasn't until right after the ban though that it became a 'cult'."

Perhaps what's most interesting about *The Great Giana Sisters* though, is that while it's obviously a blatant clone of *Super Mario Bros*, the actual titles do play very differently to each other. Yes, you now collect 100 diamonds instead of coins in order to gain an extra life and the ability to blow bubbles is virtually identical to Mario's fireball-throwing skills, but gameplay is very different due to everything taking place against a far shorter time limit. Then, of course, there are the controls of the main character to consider. Giana is actually far looser to control than her moustachioed counterpart and she also lacks the physics of her portlier peer, hanging for a lot longer in the air whenever she makes a jump.

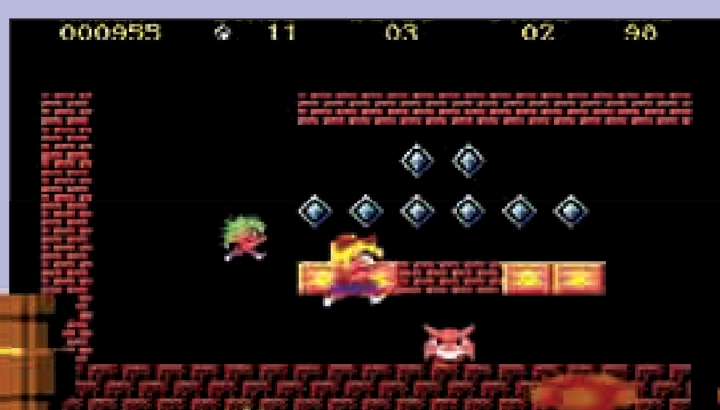
"I wanted to make the levels in *Great Giana Sisters* far simpler and shorter than they were in *Super Mario Bros*," explains Trenz. "We actually decided to make the stages smaller on purpose because it allowed us to have a multiple of different levels within a very short development time. There was plenty of testing throughout *Giana*'s development period, so I feel the time limits we imposed are actually quite fair."

After all the controversy, Trenz is still fond of *Great Giana Sisters*, the rights of which are now held by Gessert's Spellbound Entertainment, even if it didn't match its parent's quality. "I think it's a great game, but it never reached the detail and class of *Super Mario Bros*."

Many avid C64 fans will no doubt disagree with the above words, but it matters not. They committed *Giana* to their hearts 20 years ago. Two decades on and the love is still there.

» [Atari ST] Giana's punk hairstyle may have made destroying blocks a breeze, but it was a nightmare to get right each morning.





Special thanks to Manfred Trenz and the wonderful Matt Allen

CLASSIC GAMING ON A BUDGET

CHEAP AS CHIPS



If there's one thing we've learned about retro gaming, it's that your money can stretch an amazingly long way if you actually want it to. Granted, a mint copy of *Radiant Silvergun* is going to cost you a small fortune, but there are plenty of other worthy titles that can picked up for less than a fiver

A BOY AND HIS BLOB

- » **SYSTEM:** NES
- » **RELEASED:** 1989
- » **PUBLISHER:** ABSOLUTE ENTERTAINMENT
- » **DEVELOPER:** IN-HOUSE



David Crane is better known for creating *Ghostbusters* and a game about someone made out of taffy falling into a lot of pits… twice. But when Crane left his native home of Atari to join Activision he would later go on to co-found his own company, Absolute Entertainment, and it was here that he would create a peculiar, and relatively forgotten, little puzzle treasure-hunt platform caper with the slightly bulbous-sounding name of *A Boy And His Blob: Trouble On Blobonia*.

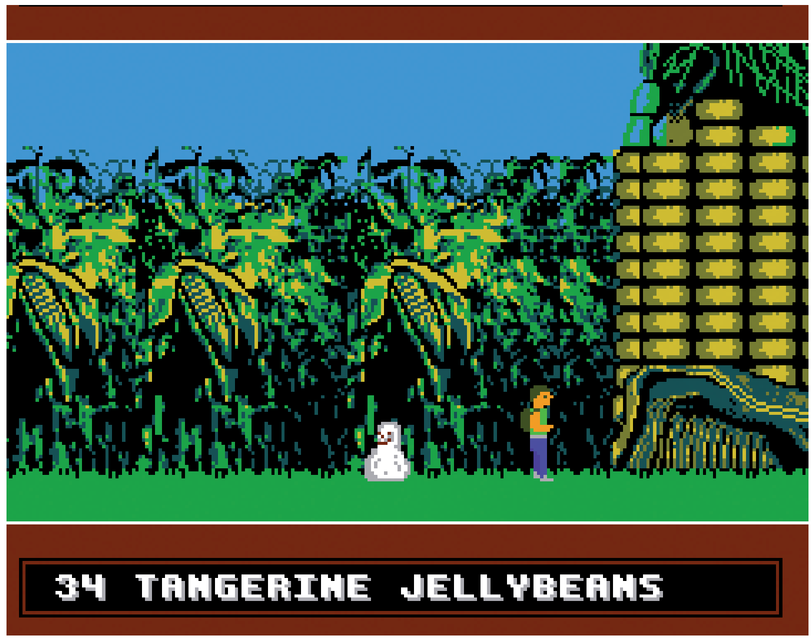
Now, don't let the fact this game sounds like a cartoon and that it owns a Parents' Choice Award from the Parents' Choice Foundation (which, in videogame terms, is like being spotted by one of your mates mowing your teacher's lawn) put you off, because it's a brilliantly conceived game which you can probably purchase for almost the same price as a few packets of those gourmet jelly babies that are scientifically fused with the taste of shepherd's pie and tiramisu.

Now it's probably worth pointing out that *A Boy And His Blob* isn't the most effusive-looking videogame to be released on the NES. A colourful palette of dark, dank and foreboding backdrops housed probably two of the most ugly looking videogame characters to ever grace the console. With the look of the Blob clearly based on a crap snowman, or a Marshmallow Man foetus, and the boy looking like a broom with a little face scratched on to it, it would be fair to assume that Crane had clearly forgotten he wasn't planning to release the thing on the 2600.

The game itself was brilliantly original, and worked a similar charm to games like *Get Dexter* and *Head Over Heels*, whereby progression continually rested on two sets of shoulders. The action would be more akin to the classic *Get Dexter* though, as you were only permitted to boss around one half of a dynamic duo, which, in this instance, was the broom-faced boy. The trusty Blob was the cooler of the two characters, as he was tragically born with a random set of allergic reactions to differing flavoured jelly babies. The puzzle aspect of *A Boy And His Blob* came from working out when and what jelly baby (using quite a bit of trial and error, we will add) to feed to the Blob to get the peculiar pair through the many perplexing obstacles that the game served up. There was an impressive amount of differing practical power inside the jubilant bouncing ball. Feed him a liquorice jelly baby, for instance, and he would morph into a ladder to help our heroes gain access to higher platforms, throw a vanilla chew into his gob and he would contort into an umbrella capable of stopping falling rubble smashing your head open like a coconut. Actually, that reminds us, feed Blob a coconut-flavoured jelly baby and he turned into a coconut. Why? We can't quite remember, but we're sure it was for something completely brilliant. Ultimately though, we're on the scrounge for treasure; a treasure that can be traded for more jelly babies to take with us to Blobonia for a climatic, and stupidly easily, showdown with a clay statute of Jabba the Hut.

The game had plenty of character and charm, which came mostly from the hungry ole Blob, who being slightly dim would continually lose his bearings. It was lucky then that the boy could wolf whistle and bring him to command like an ugly Crufts finalist.

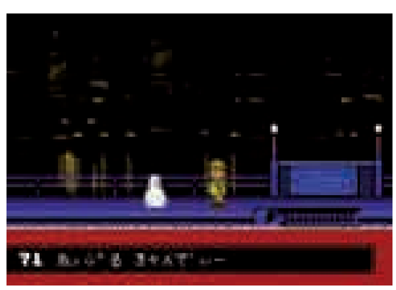
A Boy And His Blob is a quirky little puzzle game. With it's passive trial and error-style gameplay it certainly won't be to everyone's taste, but for just a few quid, we would most definitely recommend feeding a copy to any puzzle/platform enthusiast… it will most certainly give them something to chew over for a few hours.



» In the Blob's world there are loads of weird, but colourful, locales… like this giant corn farm.



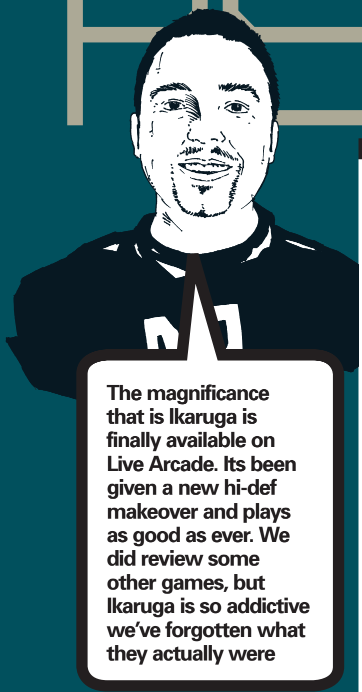
» Despite many thinking the game was aimed at kids, it featured some pretty depressing environments – like this eerie subway with weird 'Sue baby' messages.

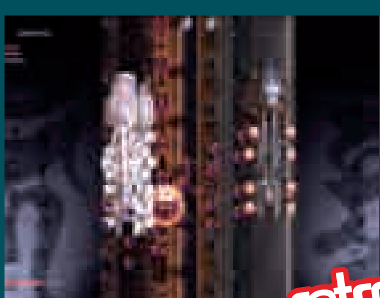


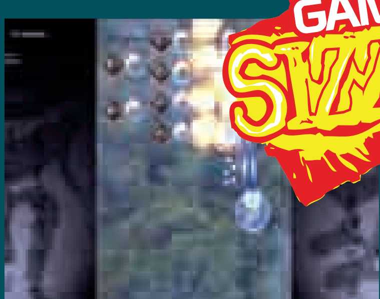
» For the game's Japanese release the Boy got himself an anime makeover… and looks all the better for it.

eMag

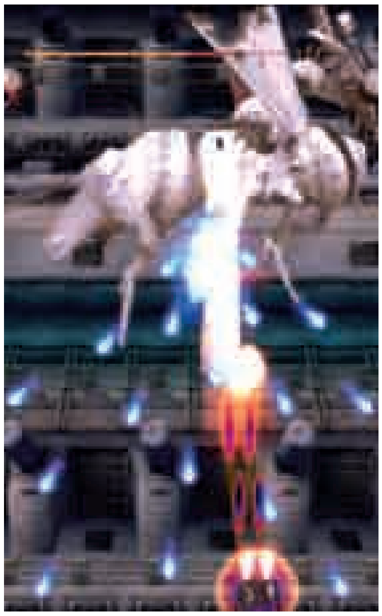
RETRORATED







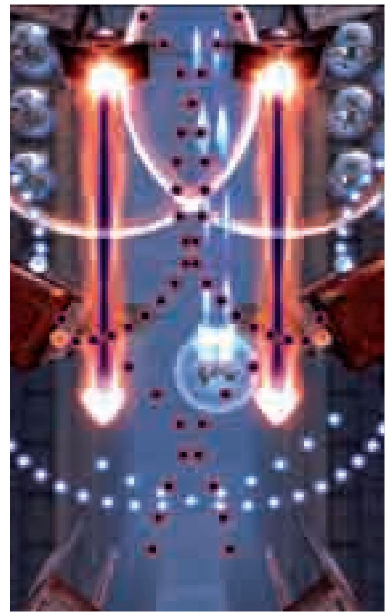
IKARUGA



» Bosses are a sight to behold and are as beautiful as they are deadly. Be sure to approach with caution.



» Boost your chain multiplier by shooting down as many trios as possible. We can get higher than this. Honest.



» Some sections require an insane amount of skill and plenty of flipping in order to make it through in one piece.

INFORMATION

- » **DOWNLOAD IT FROM:** XBOX LIVE ARCADE
- » **COST:** 800 POINTS
- » **60 HERTZ?:** YES

Ever since the first high-definition logo mysteriously appeared on PartnerNet (Microsoft's online service for journalists) we've been itching to play the excellent *Ikaruga*. Now, a good six months later after that initial early tease, Treasure's superb shooter is finally with us, and its every bit as good as we were hoping it would be.

Almost as much a puzzler as it is a balls-out shooter; high scores are reaped in *Ikaruga* by shooting down three enemies of the same colour. As with many shooters, it's only when you start employing their game mechanics that their true depth becomes apparent, and *Ikaruga* is no different. The level design throughout is meticulous and as each stage progresses and Treasure starts to mix up the grouping of *Ikaruga*'s enemies – you're initially attacked by simple waves consisting of single colours – you suddenly start to appreciate just how brilliant *Ikaruga* actually is. Not only will you find yourself desperately flipping between both ship polarities, you'll also begin to realise that *Ikaruga* is a game that rewards those who simply mash the fire button. Many waves require some delicate picking apart with short trigger blasts in order to continue your chain multiplier and as the levels progress the waves of enemies become more and more intricate.



Considering *Ikaruga*'s – much deserved – reputation we were expecting nothing less than perfection from Treasure and we're pleased to announce that it's one of the most stylish-looking games on Live Arcade. Presentation is immaculate with stunningly designed menus, excellent features (it's possible to save replays for example) and the sort of spit and polish that would normally be reserved for a top-tier release, not something you'd buy for £6.

Ikaruga is also pleasing aesthetically, with the ship designs and level layouts offering an attention to detail, which simply wasn't appreciable on the Dreamcast or GameCube. Like the recent *Rez HD*, this is another wonderful example of a classic game that has been given a bold new lease of life on the Xbox Live Arcade, let's hope it continues.

PRESENTATION: 95% Glorious-looking menus, an excellent range of options (including a TATE mode) and a great replay feature.

AESTHETICS: 98% It looked amazing on the Dreamcast, but now it looks utterly incredibly. One of the most stylish games available on the Xbox Live Arcade.

PLAYABILITY: 93% It's instantly accessible, but will require a fair amount of playing before you truly master it.

LONGEVITY: 88% It's going to take you an absolute age to complete *Ikaruga* on one credit, let alone finish it with a decent score.

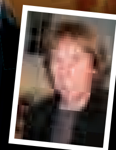
VALUE FOR MONEY: 96% The original Dreamcast game sells for over £40, this goes for just six. Bargain.

OVERALL: 95%



GAMING LIVES

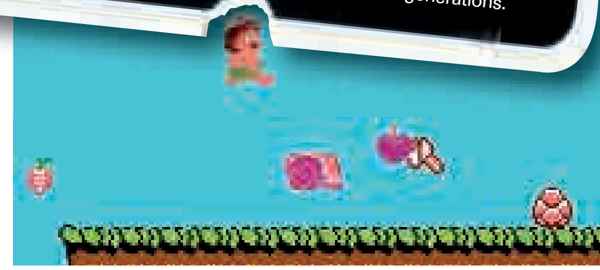
DAVID DARLING
(ex-boss of Codemasters)



Pong (arcade)

The most important videogame I ever played was *Pong*. It was so simple, but really skilful and challenging and it was on a TV screen, which was novel. But there was actually a group of games that 'formed' my impression of videogames: *Space Invaders, Battle Tanks, Asteroids, Pac-Man, Defender* and *Galaxian*. My brother and I liked the arcade games and our friend Michael bought an Atari 2600 and we'd play the games for days on end. There was a sense that we 'kids' were doing something our parents didn't understand. Strangely though, looking back on it, we didn't have any idea that videogames didn't exist before, we didn't know we were at the birth of an industry, I suppose that's 12 year olds for you, they adapt to the environment very well and don't worry or even comprehend how different their environment is compared to previous generations.

NO. 44



» It lacks the cartoony appeal of the original *Wonderboy*, but it's still impressive.

ADVENTURE ISLAND

INFORMATION

» **DOWNLOAD IT FROM:** VIRTUAL CONSOLE
» **COST:** 500 POINTS
» **60 HERTZ?:** NO

If *Adventure Island* looks familiar to you it's because it's essentially Sega's *Wonderboy* in funky new clothing. Although Tom-Tom has now been replaced by Master Higgins this is essentially the original arcade hit and it's a bloody good conversion as well.

For those who are unaware, *Adventure Island* is a scrolling platformer that features plenty of precision leaping, a huge variety of enemies and some deviously designed levels.

While Master Higgins is initially defenceless, cracking open eggs will reveal a variety of handy power-ups that makes negotiating the enemy-strewn levels far easier.

A hammer allows Higgins to club enemies to death instead of simply jumping over them, there's a handy skateboard that speeds the little tyke up and acts as an extra life, while fairies grant him limited invulnerability from the on-screen hazards.

While we prefer the brighter look of the Master System's conversion of *Wonderboy, Adventure Islands* still looks pretty impressive on the NES and features solid backgrounds, decently animated sprites and insanely catchy tunes. It's a little sluggish due to running at 50 hertz, but it's not as painstakingly noticeable as *Sonic The Hedgehog* and it certainly doesn't spoil the game to any real degree.

With still no sign of any Master System games yet on the Virtual Console, this is your next best bet. A charming platformer that's still a joy to play.

PRESENTATION: 55% The bare minimum of menus and that's all you get.

AESTHETICS: 82% There's some excellent detail on offer and the action is smooth and fast. We've a soft spot for the music as well.

PLAYABILITY: 91% Like all of the best platformers *Adventure Island* is instantly accessible and boasts slick, tight controls.

LONGEVITY: 85% It's certainly not an easy game to complete, so it's going to be quite a while before you reach *Adventure Island*'s end.

VALUE FOR MONEY: 65% It's expensive considering an original physical copy will cost you the same price, but it's still an enjoyable platformer.

OVERALL: 74%

TRIGGERHEART EXELICA

INFORMATION

» **DOWNLOAD IT FROM:** XBOX LIVE ARCADE
» **COST:** 800 POINTS
» **60 HERTZ?:** YES

Poor old *Triggerheart Exelica*. It finally gets Xbox Live Arcade all to itself and then Treasure's *Ikaruga* comes along and spoils all the fun.

Before you fling your Dreamcast copy on eBay though, you may actually want to think about hanging on to it, as this version of *Triggerheart Exelica* lacks the extra gameplay modes that appeared on Sega's console and is pretty much a bare bones conversion of Warashi's original coin-op version of the game.

Worry not, for while *Triggerheart* lacks the skill, depth and elegance of Treasure's blaster, it remains a solid shooter, with a nifty mechanic and the sort of eclectic soundtrack that you only seem to hear in shoot-'em-ups. Whereas *Ikaruga*'s calling card is its polarity, *Triggerheart* relies on an anchor. Any flying enemy, no matter what its size, can be caught by your craft and swung around your ship as a handy shield. Providing it doesn't take too much damage it can then be flung into a group of enemies and their bullets for huge points.

Destroyed enemies and bullets turn into medals, and providing the fire button is held down, they'll increase in size (and points) as they drop towards the bottom of the screen. Taking your finger off the fire sucks up any on-screen medals, so, like *Ikaruga*, it doesn't necessarily pay to have a heavy trigger finger.

Add in the huge bosses that morph through several forms and *Triggerheart Exelica* proves that while it's not the prettiest shooter, it's by no means the worst.



» This is really pretty simple. Dodge the purple things, collect the yellow things and shoot everything else. How hard can it be?



» If you're good enough you'll see a boss go through a variety of different forms before it finally blows up.

PRESENTATION: 81% There are some handy options – a TATE mode is included – but the lack of Dreamcast extras is a real missed opportunity.

AESTHETICS: 77% It's certainly not the prettiest shooter that we've ever played, but it does feature an excellent soundtrack alongside the gameplay.

PLAYABILITY: 80% While *Triggerheart*'s instructions are displayed before you start playing, it's quite a while before you fully master its controls.

LONGEVITY: 84% There's a surprising amount of depth on offer, especially if you want to unlock all of *Triggerheart*'s achievements.

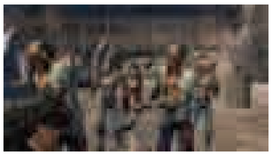
VALUE FOR MONEY: 88% Not as good as *Ikaruga*, but still decent when you consider how expensive the Dreamcast version still is.

OVERALL: 80%

REVIEW

THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2 & 3 RETURN

PROOF THAT SEGA'S AIM IS AS DEADLY AS EVER



- **SYSTEM:** Wii
- **PRICE:** £29.99
- **RELEASED:** OUT NOW
- **PUBLISHER:** SEGA
- **DEVELOPER:** IN-HOUSE
- **PLAYERS:** 1-2



We love Sega and it's not just because it seems intent on turning the Wii into the very next Dreamcast. No, the reason for our blind infatuation is because over the years it has created some of the best, most exhilarating arcade experiences around, and slowly, but ever so slowly they're starting to crop up on Nintendo's Wii.

The House Of The Dead 2 & 3 Return swiftly follows *Sega Bass Fishing*, with *Samba De Amigo* patiently waiting in the wings, and we can only imagine how many other potential classics are waiting to be released in the future – we did tie up Sega's Stefan McGarry and started tickling his feet with peacock feathers, but he was laughing far too much to tell us anything.

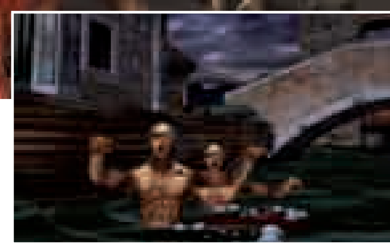
Sega has already proven, with the brilliant *Ghost Squad*, that it knows a thing or five about creating quality lightgun titles for the Wii and *Return* is certainly no exception. Control is wonderfully precise and it's possible to pull off some really intricate shots, which becomes very handy, as some of the bosses' weak spots can be notoriously tricky to hit.

The controls may be absolutely spot-on, but if we're honest, we're somewhat disappointed with the lack of love that's gone into this compilation. Yes, it's great that we've been given two wonderful blasters (*HOTD 2* is still amazing, even a decade on from its original release) but where are the all-new play modes? Why is there no widescreen support? Why can't we take the fight online? Where is the original Saturn conversion of *HOTD*? The short answer is because this was obviously a quick and easy port for Sega to produce. Sega has included a new Extreme mode for *HOTD 3*, but it just isn't enough.

On the other hand, both games are still brilliant blasters in their own right, and while they lack the complexity and sheer replay factor of *Ghost Squad*, there are enough alternative routes and, in the case of *HOTD 2*, extras to keep dragging you back for that critical one more go.

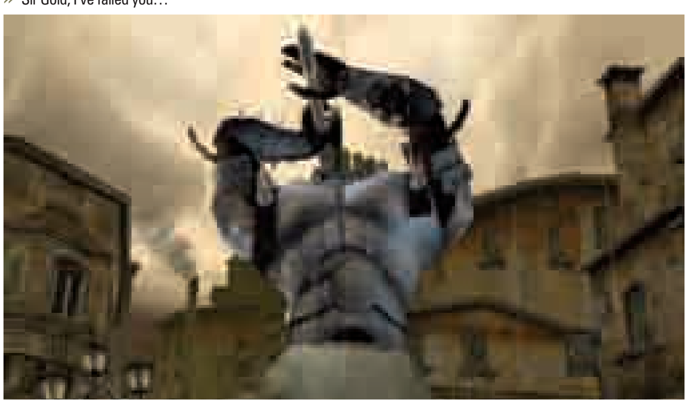
Granted the game looks far from spectacular when compared to more recent Wii releases and it boasts voice acting that's so poor it makes the scripts from *Resident Evil* look like pure gold, but there's no denying that both games remain excellent fun to play. And ultimately, isn't that what really matters?





» On the right there is an exclusive new picture from *'Zombie Jacuzzi Party II: Bubble Harder'*.

» "Sir Gold, I've failed you…"





OPINION



It's disappointing that so little love appears to have been poured into it, but this is still a superb lightgun compilation. *The House Of The Dead 2* is arguably the best game on here, but I was surprised at how well the later sequel holds up. Control is surprisingly responsive (you can auto-calibrate by shooting at the top-right corner of the screen), the music still sounds amazing and this time, all the original blood is in place. Let's just hope Sega brings *Confidential Mission* and *Virtua Cop* out of retirement next. I'd buy them.

Ashley Day

IN SUMMARY

Yes, we were expecting more, but both games remain thoroughly entertaining shooters. If you're a fan of *Ghost Squad* then this should definitely be your next purchase.

THE SCORES

Presentation **65%**

Fairly simplistic menus nevertheless drip with a certain charm. While there are few extras in *HOTD 3*, there some very impressive ones in *HOTD 2*.

Aesthetics **80%**

The low polygon counts and slowdown in *HOTD 3* are a little disturbing, but there's no denying that both games have a distinctive graphical style.

Playability **90%**

Point and shoot. What more do you need to know?

Longevity **81%**

While there are a fair few extras included, they lack the huge amount of depth that *Ghost Squad*'s offer.

Value for Money **79%**

Thirty notes for two near-perfect ports is pretty good value. If only Sega had made more of an effort.

Overall **78%**

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HOMEBREW RATED

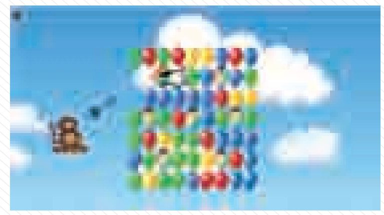
STUART SPENDS AN AFTERNOON POPPING BALLOONS AND OPENING AND CLOSING DOORS (THE USUAL THEN – ED)

EVEN MORE BLOONS

OH NO! NOT MORE BALLOONS



» "Left turn, Clyde."



» "Now, let's have a look at what you could've won!"



FORMAT: PC
DEVELOPED BY: NINJA KIWI
LINK: WWW.NINJAKIWI.COM/MOREBLOONS.HTML
PRICE: FREE
REVIEWED BY: STUART HUNT

For some people, throwing a dart at something can be hard work. There's a certain knack to it, you see. You have to be careful not to hold the dart too far forward otherwise it'll dip in mid-flight and stick in the face of a drunk or an infant.

Thankfully though, *Even More Bloons* is a game that makes throwing darts accessible for all ages and dart-throwing skill sets. Instead of an old cork dartboard to throw your arrow into, you get the chance to throw it at balloons, and not just any old carbon dioxide-filled balloons either… but balloons pumped with helium, nitrogen and even filled with nails, all of which will react differently to getting popped.

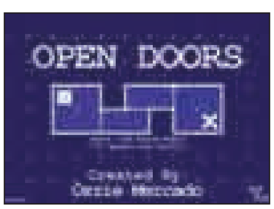
Using the mouse, you control a monkey who – armed with a paltry amount of darts – must clear the screen of a varying percentage of colourful balloons. The monkey's outstretched arm marks the trajectory that he will throw the darts, then, influencing the strength of his throw by holding down the mouse button, you'll toss the dart and hope it takes out as many balloons as possible.

Now, the puzzle elements of *Even More Bloons* come into play because on each level there's a limited amount of darts to be thrown. You do have the option to play with unlimited darts but, in all honesty, opting to play *Even More Bloons* in this way is kind of like playing *Street Fighter II* with an infinite health cheat activated. There are 50 levels for you and your monkey to work through and the game does get taxing pretty quickly, meaning that the later levels tend to feel a bit more trial and error than skill. Overall though, *Even More Bloons* is an enjoyable enough little puzzler that will happily while away an hour or two of your day.

PRESENTATION: 68% Looks nice and colourful – but the monkey's graphics look really unrealistic.
AESTHETICS: 55% Feels flashy – and that's because it's made in Flash.
PLAYABILITY: 57% Enjoyable to begin with, but slowly becomes tedious.
LONGEVITY: 70% If you play without infinite darts, it's highly likely that you'll never finish this game.
VALUE FOR MONEY: NA
OVERALL: 65%

OPEN DOORS

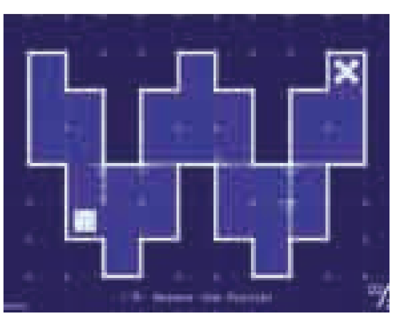
JOHN HANNAH MONTANA



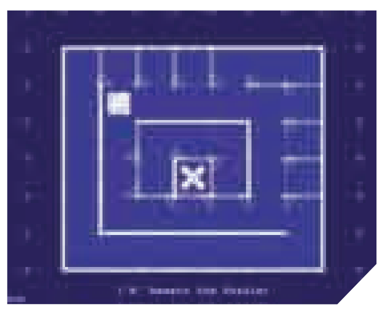
FORMAT: PC
DEVELOPED BY: OZZIE MERCADO (SOAPAINTNICE)
LINK: WWW.KONGREGATE.COM
PRICE: FREE
REVIEWED BY: STUART HUNT

Not to be confused with a videogame version of that *Sliding Doors* flick starring Gwyneth Paltrow and that actress who turned out to be a bunny boiler in *Basic Instinct*. Instead, *Open Doors* is a brilliant mix of a simple puzzle game and those computer programs that B&Q sales agents use to show you how a moth would view your new kitchen or bathroom.

Now we all know the tribulations that open and shutting doors in videogames can bring. There's the stop/start barrier of entry that they represent, the way in which they shamefully try to skirt past loading times by showing you a cut-scene of your character twisting a handle, or, in *Resident Evil*'s case, staring at them until they seemingly open the door of their own free will. Well, *Open Doors* is a game that goes some lengths to making opening and shutting doors in a videogame an enjoyable experience.

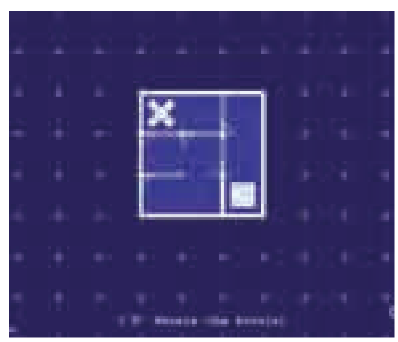


» Essentially *Open Doors* is *Tetris* meets OCD.



» It might look like a piece of graph paper, that's because it is.

Open Doors is perhaps as rudimentary in looks as it is in instruction: help get a square to meet a cross that's been plonked in a really annoying place on a map consisting of brick walls and swing doors. The puzzle element of the game comes from the fact that you have to work out the correct route through the grid, open the doors in the correct order and, ultimately, reunite the aforementioned square and cross. In this respect – the reuniting of two objects, tragically pulled apart by fate – you could argue that *Open Doors* does loosely tie in with that *Sliding Doors* movie, but as we've never seen the film we would, of course, be hazarding a guess.



PRESENTATION: 44% Lines, crosses and squares – as basic as it gets.
AESTHETICS: 80% The shop-floor-plan look suits the game brilliantly.
PLAYABILITY: 70% Accessible and enjoyable but does get a little repetitive.
LONGEVITY: 80% The game holds the attention, but the troughs of difficulty are a bit too sporadic.
VALUE FOR MONEY: NA
OVERALL: 80%

COME DO THE LOCOMOTION WITH RETRO GAMER, AND JOIN STU IN THROWING SOME RABID MONKEYS AT YOUR FAVOURITE TV DETECTIVES

GAMES THAT CHANGED LIVES NO. 45

ARCHER MACLEAN

(games programmer and creator of International Karate)

Pong (Arcade)

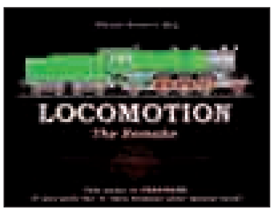


I can trace my earliest and most inspirational videogame moment back to the very dawn of the games industry in 1972, and way before *Asteroids, Pac-Man* or *Robotron*. On a school trip to Bude, Cornwall, I found a yellow machine in a seafront arcade. But this one was different. It had *'Pong'* written on the top, and a single bright white dot bouncing back and forth on its B&W TV screen. I was spellbound, and spent lots of money playing it. And so began a long-running love affair with computer games. 36 years later, I collect/restore those early arcade games because they inspired me to make a career out of inventing my own and I'm paying homage to them for all that they've done for me!

LOCOMOTION

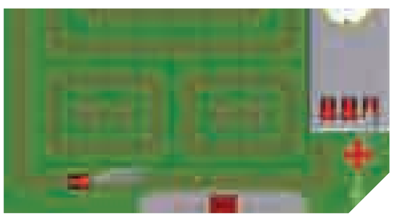
"HEY ESE, YOU DRIVIN' ME LOCO"

FORMAT: PC
DEVELOPED BY: KRYTON
LINK: WWW.KRYTEN2X4B.PWP.BLUEYONDER.CO.UK/
PRICE: FREE
REVIEWED BY: STUART HUNT

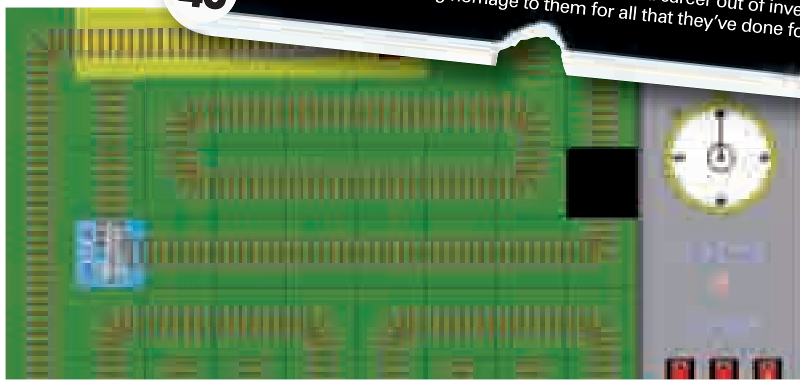


Now if you're anything like us, then you will hate those stupid sliding-tile puzzles – the ones where you have to complete a picture of a clown's face. Well, *Locomotion* is the videogame equivalent of those flawed games.

It began life as a Konami arcade game in 1982, and looked about as exciting as reading old TV guides. What made *Locomotion* unique was the fact that you were in control of a playfield and not a plumber or a pill-popping face. Shifting the tiles into the open spaces, you had to build up pieces of a track in a race against the clock, while all the time collecting irate passengers along the way – it really was a thankless task.



» "Everybody's doing a brand new dance now."



» This game is likely to drive you loco.

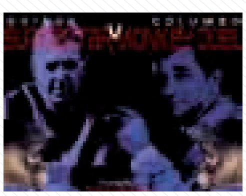
This update, however, is a remake of Mastertronic's remake called *Loco-Motive*, and so, things here are a little different. For a start there are no impatient fares to juggle, just you and the frustrating machine. Actually, that's not true, as there are water pumps to collect for bonus points. But seriously, if you're *that* good at this game that you can annoyingly showboat, by filling up your blessed train for nothing more than a few bonus points, and then get your chugging train to the station, then you are built of much sterner stuff than us.

Despite getting an obligatory paint job, as you've probably guessed, *Locomotion* has lost none of its difficulty. If you're a fan of very hard puzzle games and enjoyed those annoyingly pointless code-breaking sections in *BioShock*, then here's a train ride that's guaranteed to nonplus even Miss Marple.

PRESENTATION: 50% Terribly average looking.
AESTHETICS: 65% It feels and looks like an Amiga coverdisk game.
PLAYABILITY: 51% It's just a top-down train set that has to be built in one minute!
LONGEVITY: 62% Very hard. Seeing a train arrive at a station isn't much of a motivator.
VALUE FOR MONEY: NA
OVERALL: 56%

QUINCY V COLUMBO SUPERSTAR MONKEY DUEL

COLUM-BLOW



FORMAT: PC
DEVELOPED BY: PROFESSOR STYLUS
LINK: WWW.GEOCITIES.COM/TIMESSQUARE/CORNER/3199/QVC.HTM
PRICE: FREE
REVIEWED BY: STUART HUNT

Although we don't really like to make a habit of covering ageing homebrew titles, when one catches our eye (like *Mondo Medicals* back in issue 46 – the 'wood issue'), we feel a certain duty to tell you guys about it.

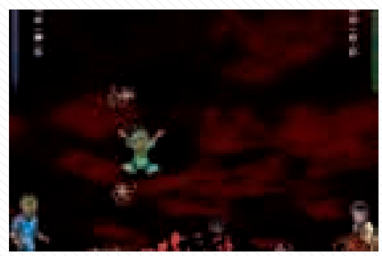
It was actually Games™'s Retro Gamer-contributor Ashley Day who introduced us to the delights of *Quincy V Columbo Superstar Monkey Duel*, only a few weeks back. Admittedly, while the game isn't without its glaring gameplay flaws – the most obvious being that it requires two human beings at all times – it's also not without its own unique charms. Playing the role of either the medical examiner/meddling detective Quincy, or the seemingly stupid Columbo, you must take it in turns to lob an infinite amount of rabid monkeys at one another until your opponent dies from repeated monkey bites.



» "Gentlemen, welcome to the world of monkey duelling."

Admittedly, it proves to be an utterly stupid way for two people to spend ten minutes of their life together, but then where else are you going to get the opportunity to see Jack Klugman throwing a monkey at the legendary Peter Faulk?

To add a nuance of variety, differing meditating monkeys will hover above the fight screen and reward you with power-ups for smashing them out of the sky using one of their brethren. These rewards will vary from explosive monkeys to



» It might look fun, but behind the humour is an average game.

lightning bolts, which hammer down from heaven, and, in typical American sitcom style, can even spark the appearance of a mystery guest to hop across the screen and generally prove zero useful! In Quincy's corner you get Sam Fujiyama, that dude that always made Quincy his coffee, and on Columbo's side you get to wield the feminine wares of Mrs Columbo – essentially just Mr Columbo in a red cocktail dress.

PRESENTATION: 30% It looks like one of Quincy's decomposing cadavers.
AESTHETICS: 25% Feels knocked up in about four minutes, and plays that way, too.
PLAYABILITY: 30% Not solid enough.
LONGEVITY: 25% It's likely to hold your interest for a few minutes, but that's about it.
VALUE FOR MONEY: NA
OVERALL: 29%

BARGAIN HUNT

GAMES LIVES
NO. 46
OLIVIER FLOQUET
(French programmer for Binary Sciences)
Bomb Jack



The game that means the most to me is *Bomb Jack*, because in the early Nineties I played it every weekend with my sister and my cousins. It was so attractive that even people not interested in my CPC became addicted! We laughed a lot and it was a good era of my life. I now have a real feeling of nostalgia!

HUNT DOWN BARGAINS OR JUST DRINK UP THE LOVELINESS OF ALL THIS RETRO GOODNESS. FEAST YOUR EYES ON SIX PAGES OF THE VERY BEST THAT RETRO GAMING HAS TO OFFER…

Collecting retro games can be great fun, but you need to have a rough idea how much it's going to cost you. So here for your buying pleasure is Retro Gamer's buyer's guide. Where possible we have endeavoured to list the earliest international launch date, be it Asia, America or Europe. Prices were compiled from a variety of sources, including eBay, Japanese auctions, car-boot sales, traders and general consensus. Foreign items will often be cheaper in their local country, so regional differences should be considered. Also, bear in mind that online items will often be cheaper than you will find in specialist stores. If you see an item selling for far less, good for you! We aim to help with finding those bargains, but if you see an item sold for much higher make sure you really want to purchase it. Prices fluctuate and the market sways, so there can never be a concrete listing. Bear in mind that something is worth as much as someone else is willing to pay. No one is perfect though, and we will openly admit that with over a hundred different systems to list, mistakes can happen. If you spot a glaring error in our listings, please drop us an email at retrogamer@imagine-publishing.co.uk and let us know about it.

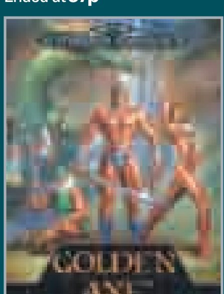
RETRO AUCTION WATCH

Retro Gamer will be sifting through countless pages of eBay and reporting on any items of interest (hardware and software) that have caught our eye. As you may have noticed, we've changed the theme recently and are looking at specific categories. This month we look at a selection of Mega Drive arcade conversions

SPLATTERHOUSE 2
Normally sells for **£12**
Ended at **£17.35**



GOLDEN AXE
Normally sells for **£2**
Ended at **37p**



3DO



3DO GOLDSTAR
» YEAR **1993**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£45+ ($83 - $111)**

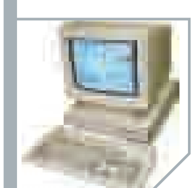


PANASONIC FZ-1 (FRONT LOADER)
» YEAR **1993**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£40 - £60 ($74 - $111)**



PANASONIC FZ-10 (TOP LOADER)
» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20+ ($37+)**
While 3DO systems had much potential, there wasn't enough software support and it eventually stopped production. There were still some great games released.
- STAR CONTROL 2
- RETURN FIRE
- CRASH AND BURN

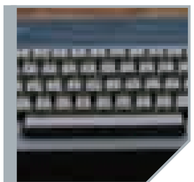
ACORN



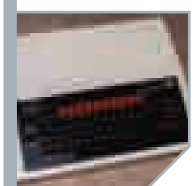
ARCHIMEDES
» YEAR **1987**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30 ($55) with games**
Early RISC-based home computer, quite powerful at the time.



ATOM
» YEAR **1980**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50 ($92)**
Extremely old home computer by Acorn that's now hard to find.



ACORN ELECTRON
» YEAR **1983**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 ($18)**
Budget version of the BBC home computer (below).



BBC MICRO
» YEAR **1982**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£15 ($28)**
A classic British home computer, and quite popular. Affectionately known as 'the Beeb'.
- EXILE
- ELITE
- WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST

AMSTRAD



CPC 464
» YEAR **1984**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10+ ($18+)**
Early classic 8-bit home computer from Amstrad, designed to compete against the C64 and ZX Spectrum. This early model has a built-in cassette tape deck. Beware the models that come with a green screen monitor.



CPC 664
» YEAR **1985**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£90+ ($165+)**
Like the 464, except with a floppy disk drive. A short-lived model that was soon replaced by the superior 6128.



CPC 6128
» YEAR **1985**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£25+ ($46+)**
Improved model which doubled the RAM of previous iterations. Later 'Plus' models came with a cartridge port.
- GET DEXTER
- XOR
- SORCERY +



GX4000
» YEAR **1990**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50+ ($92+)**
Console version of the CPC Plus range, came with joypads. Limited range of games.
- BURNIN' RUBBER
- PANG
- SWITCHBLADE

APPLE



APPLE II
» YEAR **1977**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30+ ($55+) with games**
Like many early computers the Apple II was hand-built and sold to enthusiasts.
- KARATEKA
- ULTIMA IV
- LODE RUNNER

ATARI



400/800/600XL/XE
» YEAR **1979**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20+ ($37+)**
Series of old 8-bit Atari home computers.
- DROP ZONE
- THRUST
- ZYBEX



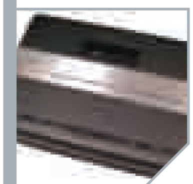
2600 (VCS)
» YEAR **1977**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20+ ($37+)**
Earliest console by Atari. Various models, many with the classic wood panelling effect. Many UK gamers had their first taste of videogames on this.
- PITFALL
- ADVENTURE
- COSMIC ARK

RARITY GUIDE

ROCKING HORSE SHIT
HEN'S TEETH
LUCKY FIND
EBAY REGULAR
CAR-BOOT SALE BARGAIN



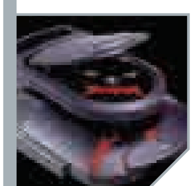
5200
» YEAR **1982**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30 ($55)**
Unpopular successor to the 2600, regarded as an Atari 400 without a keyboard.
- RESCUE ON FRACTALUS
- DIG DUG
- ZAXXON



7800
» YEAR **1987**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20+ ($37+)**
Handily, Atari made the 7800 backwards compatible with the ever popular 2600.
- KARATEKA
- CHOPLIFTER
- WINTER GAMES



JAGUAR
» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20+ ($37+)**
Failed attempt to beat the PlayStation and Saturn in the console race. Few decent games. But it does have Jeff Minter's *Tempest*!
- TEMPEST 2000
- ALIEN VS PREDATOR
- BATTLESPHERE (RARE AND EXPENSIVE!)



JAGUAR CD
» YEAR **1995**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£70 ($129)**
Rare and overpriced CD add-on for the Jaguar. Very few games, but it does look very much like a toilet seat!
- BATTLEMORPH CD
- HIGHLANDER CD
- TEMPEST 2000 MUSIC CD

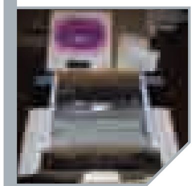


LYNX I/II (2ND IS SMALLER)
» YEAR **1990**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£15 ($28)**
Powerful handheld from Atari that failed due to poor marketing and battery life.
- BLUE LIGHTNING
- CALIFORNIA GAMES
- DIRTY LARRY RENEGADE COP



ST
» YEAR **1985**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20+ ($37+) depending on model**
This is an Atari home computer and a big rival to the Amiga. There are many different models available, of various specifications.
- DUNGEON MASTER
- POPULOUS
- DAMOCLES

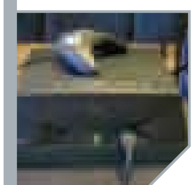
BANDAI



GUNDAM RX-78 COMPUTER
» YEAR **1983**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£75+ ($138+) prices fluctuate wildly**
Ultra-rare, early Japanese games computer by Bandai. Aimed at both gamers and anime fans. Expect to pay a much higher price for a machine that's in mint condition.



PLAYDIA
» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£90 ($166) and upwards according to eBay**
Bizarre Japan-only console, apparently made for kids.
- SAILOR MOON
- ULTRAMAN
- DRAGON BALL Z



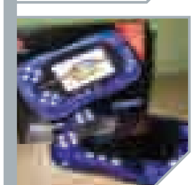
PIPPIN (ATMARK)
» YEAR **1995**
» RARITY
» PRICE **Approx £500+ ($921+)**
A strange hybrid system from Bandai and Apple. Very expensive and with very few games available. Its high price means that it's normally only sought after by collectors.
- RACING DAYS
- DRAGON BALL Z
- GUNDAM TACTICS



WONDERSWAN (B/W)
» YEAR **1999**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 ($18)**



WONDERSWAN COLOR
» YEAR **1999**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 ($37)**



WONDERSWAN CRYSTAL
» YEAR **2000**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£25 ($46)**
Handheld system by Bandai, fairly popular. Can now be bought very cheaply, especially in Japan. Be sure to buy the SwanCrystal, which is basically an improved 'Color' model. Both colourised models can run B/W WS games.
- GUNPEY EX
- SWAN COLOSSEUM
- JUDGEMENT SILVERSWORD

COMMODORE



AMIGA 500/600/1200
» YEAR **1985**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20+ ($37+) more with games, depending on model**
Classic and incredibly popular 16-bit home computer by Commodore that was designed to compete against the Atari ST range. Vast array of different models with differing specs. The Amiga 500 (with a RAM upgrade) is a particular favourite with many gamers.
- SPEEDBALL 2: BRUTAL DELUXE
- LEMMINGS
- SENSIBLE WORLD OF SOCCER



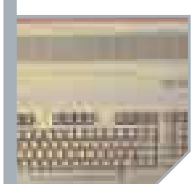
C16/PLUS 4
» YEAR **1984**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£15+ ($28+)**
The less well-known sibling of the C64, but without the compatibility of its peers.
- TUTTI FRUTTI
- MONTY ON THE RUN
- KIKSTART



C64
» YEAR **1982**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10+ ($18+)**
One of the bestselling 8-bit home computers of all time. Competed against the Spectrum and Amstrad home computers. Featured the wonderful SID sound chip that was put to amazing use by the likes of Ben Daglish and Rob Hubbard.
- WIZBALL
- MAYHEM IN MONSTERLAND
- PARADROID



C64 GS (GAMES SYSTEM)
» YEAR **1990**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30+ ($55+)**
Commodore's cartridge-based machine that tried to take on both Nintendo and Sega. Sadly failed due to a lack of support from most publishers.
- PANG
- NAVY SEALS
- BATTLE COMMAND

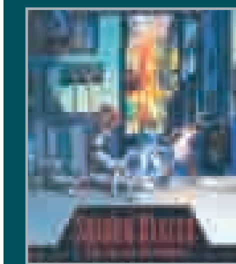


C128
» YEAR **1985**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30+ ($55+)**
Three machines (CPM, C64 and C128) in one box. Specialised software is relatively small in number.

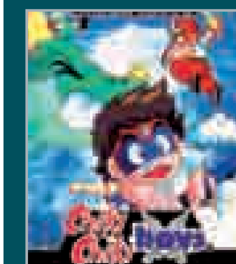


CDTV
» YEAR **1990**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 ($37)**
Commodore aimed for the 'every home should have one' market and missed by a country

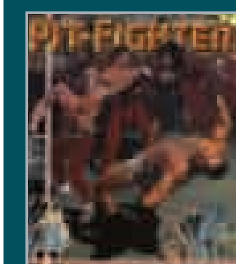
SHADOW DANCER
Normally sells for **£5**
Ended at **£9.98**



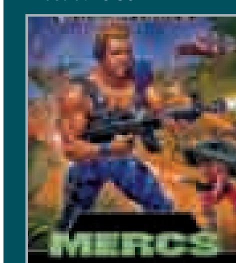
CHIKI CHIKI BOYS
Normally sells for **£12**
Ended at **£19.65**



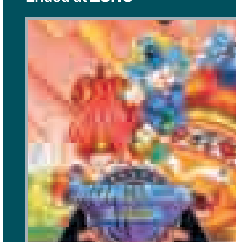
PIT-FIGHTER
Normally sells for **£2**
Ended at **No Sale**



MERCS
Normally sells for **£5**
Ended at **£8.36**



WONDER BOY III: MONSTER LAIR
Normally sells for **£6**
Ended at **£3.18**





SIMON FARMER (general manager - Rare)

Sabre Wulf and Chaos (Spectrum)

Two games stand out. Ultimate's *Sabre Wulf* was very expensive at £9.95, featured state-of-the-art graphics and came in a fancy box. The budget version of Julian Gollop's Chaos cost me just £1.99, had some of the worst graphics I'd ever seen and was stuffed inside a generic cassette case. The glitz and glamour of Sabre Wulf may have 'ultimately' led to my career in the industry, but it was the simple brilliance of Chaos that consumed the greatest chunks of my teenage years.

NO. 47

mile. A curious mixture of games and educational material.

CD32



» YEAR **1992**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£25 ($46)**

CD-based console that followed on from the experimental CDTV. Sometimes described as a consolised Amiga 1200 with CD drive. Despite featuring some extremely impressive games, the majority failed to improve on their 500 and 1200 counterparts.

- EXILE
- SIMON THE SORCERER
- ALIEN BREED 3D

VIC-20



» YEAR **1980**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10+ ($18+) based on condition/extras**

The computer that established the Commodore brand.

- HELLGATE
- SERPENTINE
- SUPER SMASH

FUJITSU

FUJITSU FM COMPUTERS



» YEAR **1989**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£100+ ($184+)**

Early Nineties home computers by Fujitsu.

FUJITSU FM TOWNS MARTY



» YEAR **1993**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£200+ ($368+)**

A legendary console, which contains both a CD and disk drive. Based on Fujitsu's old FM Towns computers, and mostly backwards compatible with the majority of games. Very expensive (especially if you find a machine in mint condition), but with a lot of chic!

- ZAK MC KRAKEN
- TATSUJIN OU
- SCAVENGER 4

MISCELLANEOUS

BALLY ASTROCADE



» YEAR **1978**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 ($37)**

Early videogame system that used interchangeable cartridges, developed by the Bally games division at Midway Games.

- GATE ESCAPE
- ICBM ATTACK
- TREASURE COVE

BARCODE BATTLER



» YEAR **1993**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£5 ($18)**

Handheld LCD game, where you must swipe barcoded cards (or barcodes taken from soup packets!) to gather stats, and then battle against someone else who swiped barcodes. We're not making this up…

- THE STAND
- PET SEMETARY
- KUJO

CASIO LOOPY



» YEAR **1995**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£25 ($46)**

More insanity from the Land of the Rising Sun. This is a console designed especially for female gamers and it even allows stickers to be printed out… Casio had hoped it would do better than its PV-1000 console released in 1983.

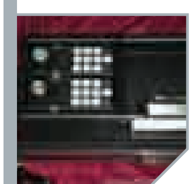
FAIRCHILD CHANNEL F



» YEAR **1976**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 ($18) from the USA**

The first commercially released console that used programmable cartridges. A real piece of history. Despite this, it's surprisingly cheap to purchase (although importing from the US may cost a fair amount).

COLECOVISION



» YEAR **1982**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30 ($55) standalone**

Coleco's third-generation videogame system. Quite a few decent games, and considering its age it's a fairly powerful machine. Many of its arcade conversions were considered superior to the other systems on the market.

- CONGO BONGO
- SMURPH RESCUE
- CABBAGE PATCH KIDS

DRAGON 32/64

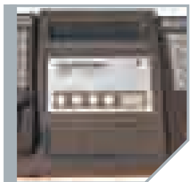


» YEAR **1982/3**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£8 ($15) very cheap on eBay**

Early British home computer that tried to cash in on the early Eighties boom. Short-lived, though quite popular. The 64 model was released roughly a year after the 32.

- GRID RUNNER
- DEVIL ASSAULT
- CAVE FIGHTER

ARCADIA 2001



» YEAR **1982**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 ($18)**

Failed console by Emerson that had numerous different clones released, as well.

- FUNKY FISH
- JUNGLER
- ROBOT KILLER

EPOCH CASSETTE VISION



» YEAR **1981**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 ($37)**

Obscure early Japanese console, which in 1983 had a budget 'Junior' model released.

EPOCH SUPER CASSETTE VISION



» YEAR **1984**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30 ($55)**

Epoch's successor to the Cassette Vision, it was also marketed in Europe under the Yeno label. Apparently it only had around 30 games released for it.

INTELLIVISION



» YEAR **1980**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£40+ ($74+) depending on extras**

Developed by Mattel, the system was revolutionary. It was the first console to be technically 16-bit, go online (to download games), and it featured voice synthesis. Today it still has a strong retro following.

- FROG BOG
- ARMOR BATTLE
- LOCK 'N' CHASE

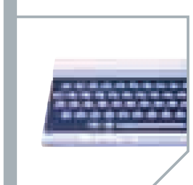
ODYSSEY



» YEAR **1972**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 ($18)**

The original home videogame console, even before Atari got in on the act. Created by Ralph Baer, this is the ultimate piece of gaming history. Fortunately, it can be purchased relatively cheaply.

ORIC-1



» YEAR **1983**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 ($37)**

The Oric-1 was a highly underrated 8-bit bit home computer created by Oric Products International. Despite having many games that were arguably superior to those on the Spectrum it was sadly unable to compete with the rival machine's high sales.

- XENON1
- INSECT INSANITY
- RAT SPLAT

PLAYSTATION



» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 ($18) depending on condition/model**

After manufacturing MSX machines, Sony re-entered the games hardware market and this time took it over. There are countless excellent PS games. It was later re-released as the PSone, which is more expensive but looks much nicer.

- CASTLEVANIA: SYMPHONY OF THE NIGHT
- FINAL FANTASY VII
- RIDGE RACER

SAM COUPÉ



» YEAR **1989**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50 - £200 ($92 - $368) allegedly for a mint system**

Originally developed by Miles Gordon Technology in Swansea, the Sam Coupé was a unique 8-bit British home computer that didn't fare very well. It could even emulate the 48K Speccy to a degree.

- DEFENDERS OF THE EARTH
- ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE ROBOT MONSTERS
- PRINCE OF PERSIA

SUPERVISION



» YEAR **1992**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£15 ($28)**

Marketed by several different companies, this was essentially a cut-price competitor to the monochrome Game Boy. Unsurprisingly, it was not manufactured for very long and is now hard to find.

TIGER ELEC. GAME.COM



» YEAR **1997**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£15 ($28)**

Attempt by Tiger Electronics to compete against the Game Boy.

- RESIDENT EVIL 2
- SONIC JAM
- DUKE NUKEM 3D

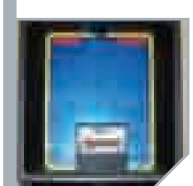
TOMY TUTOR (MK1/JR/MK2)



» YEAR **1983/4**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 ($18)**

Series of old computers by Tomy.

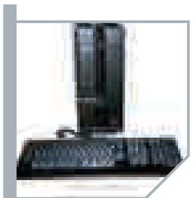
VECTREX (MB/GCE)



» YEAR **1982**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£80 ($147)**

The only home system ever to come with a vector display, enabling true vector graphics.

- SPACE WAR
- SPINBALL
- HYPERCHASE



X68000

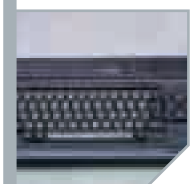
» YEAR **1987**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£90+ ($166+)**
Home computer by Sharp, released only in Japan. Famous for its arcade ports.
- CASTLEVANIA CHRONICLES
- STREET FIGHTER 2
- FINAL FIGHT

MSX



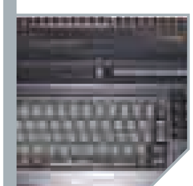
MSX 1

» YEAR **1983**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10+ ($18+)**
An early attempt to create a standard gaming platform, fairly common in the UK.
- PENGUIN ADVENTURE
- KNIGHTMARE
- THE GOONIES



MSX 2

» YEAR **1986**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20+ ($37+)**
Updated and more powerful version of the MSX, very popular in Holland and Brazil where even today some excellent home-brew games are developed.
- METAL GEAR 2
- ALESTE 2
- VAMPIRE KILLER



MSX 2+

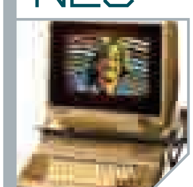
» YEAR **1988**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30+ ($55+)**
Another hardware update that proved to be very popular in Holland.
- SPACE MANBOW
- GOLVELLIUS 2
- F1 SPIRIT 3D SPECIAL



MSX TURBO R

» YEAR **1990**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30+ ($55+)**
A final and not very popular hardware update, that was virtually exclusive to Japan.
- FRAY
- PRINCESS MAKER
- ILLUSION CITY

NEC



PC-6### (ALSO MK II)

» YEAR **1984 onwards**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10+ ($18+) depending on model**
Quite old 6000 series of home computers by NEC, with a lot of cool Japanese games for it. Released in the US as the NEC Trek. Be careful of shipping prices.



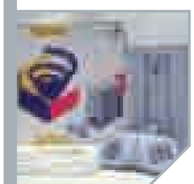
PC-8801

» YEAR **1981 onwards**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 ($37) cheap on Yahoo! Japan**
Old computer series by NEC, with several different models over the years. Has a massive roster of cool games, including the original *Silpheed*. While very cheap to buy online from Japan, shipping is expensive.



PC-9801

» YEAR **1983 onwards**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£35 ($65) cheap on Yahoo! Japan**
Another home computer series by NEC, again with many great games. Laptop versions also exist. Most games by Falcom are worth watching out for.



PCFX

» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50 ($92) prices can fluctuate**
32-bit tower console by NEC, resembles a PC. Released in Japan only, had software support until 1998. Only a few action titles. Apparently, it also had quite a bit of hentai on it.
- LAST IMPERIAL PRINCE
- CHOUJIN HEIKI ZEROIGAR (SHMUP)
- ZENKI FX (FIGHTER)



PC-ENGINE

» YEAR **1987**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£55 ($101)**
Classic piece of Japanese hardware from NEC which features many excellent arcade ports and a few exclusives. The CoreGrafx system is basically a PC-Engine with AV output.



PC-ENGINE GT

» YEAR **1990**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£70+ ($129+)**
Portable handheld version of the Japanese PC-Engine that played all Japanese Hu-Cards.



TURBO GRAFX-16

» YEAR **1989**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30 ($55)**
American version of the PC-Engine. It has territory lockout, so the two systems' Hu-Cards are not compatible.



TURBO EXPRESS

» YEAR **1990**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50 ($92) massive fluctuations**
Portable handheld version of the American Turbo Grafx-16.
- BONK/PC KID SERIES
- PC KID
- OUTRUN



SUPER GRAFX

» YEAR **1989**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£80 ($147) prices can fluctuate**
Meant to be the successor to the original PC-Engine, but sadly failed due to lack of games. It is backwards compatible, but only had six games specifically released for it.
- ALDYNES
- DARIUS PLUS
- GHOULS AND GHOSTS



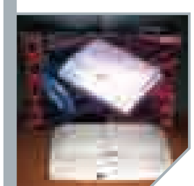
PC-E CD-ROM/ TURBO GRAFX CD

» YEAR **1988**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50+ ($92+)**
CD-ROM add-on for the PC-E and TG16, released in 1988 and 1989. It has no region lockout.



PC-E DUO/TURBO DUO

» YEAR **1991**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£120 ($221)**
System that combines the PC-E/TG16 with its CD add-on. Released in both Japan and America in 1991 and 1992. The CD games still have no region lockout.



DUO-R

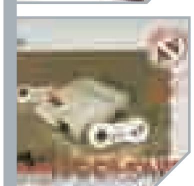
» YEAR **1993**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£80 ($147)**
Stripped-down white version of the PC-E Duo, without headphone port. Later in 1994 a Duo-RX version was released, slightly blue in colour and came with a six-button control pad.
- DRACULA X
- SHUBIBINMAN 3
- LORDS OF THUNDER

NINTENDO



FAMICOM

» YEAR **1983**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£60 ($111)**
Nintendo's first foray into the home console market, with over 1,000 games to choose from!



FAMICOM AV

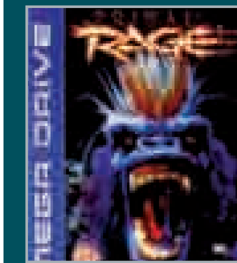
» YEAR **1993**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£40 ($74)**
A cheaper remodelled version of the Famicom, now with AV output.



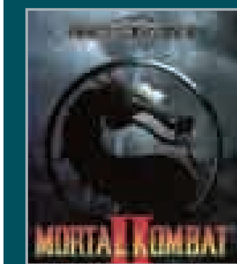
FAMICOM DISK SYSTEM

» YEAR **1986**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£70 ($129)**
Nintendo's attempt to bring cheap rewritable disk-based gaming to the masses. Be warned, the drive belts break very easily.

PRIMAL RAGE
Normally sells for **£3.50**
Ended at **£6.27**



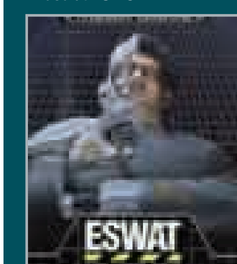
MORTAL KOMBAT II
Normally sells for **£3**
Ended at **£7.63**



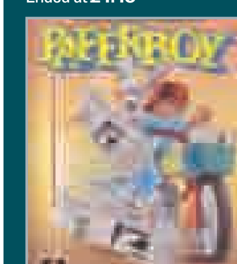
AFTER BURNER II
Normally sells for **£3**
Ended at **No Sale**



ESWAT: CITY UNDER SIEGE
Normally sells for **£4**
Ended at **£9.23**



PAPERBOY
Normally sells for **£8**
Ended at **£4.48**



GAMING LIVES

NO. 48



MARK CALE (CEO - System 3)

Space Invaders (Arcade)

From the moment I played *Space Invaders*, I thought, "Yeah, I want to get into games." But then I think most people think that. It certainly paved the way for my career and shaped the rest of my life, there is no doubt about that whatsoever.



SHARP FAMICOM TWIN

» YEAR **1986**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£100 ($184)**

Combined Famicom and Disk System, by Sharp.

- OTOCKY
- NAZO NO MURASAMEJOU
- PATLABOR



GAME&WATCH

» YEAR **1980-1991**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£1+ ($2+)**

Series of handheld LCD games that were created by the legendary Gunpei Yokoi.



GAME BOY B/W

» YEAR **1989**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£5 ($9)**

Nintendo's original handheld portable, with interchangeable cartridges. Despite its age, and monochrome display, there are many excellent classic GB games.

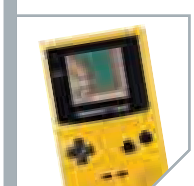


GAME BOY POCKET

» YEAR **1996**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£8 ($15)**

A smaller and more compact Game Boy, with improved screen. A Japanese version with built-in light was released and sells for a much higher price.

- SUPER MARIO LAND
- TETRIS
- POKÉMON



GAME BOY COLOR

» YEAR **1998**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£12 ($22)**

Colour-based version of the classic Game Boy. Backwards compatible, but it also has several exclusive games that were rather special.

- METAL GEAR SOLID: GHOST BABEL
- RESIDENT EVIL GAIDEN
- HARVEST MOON 3



GAME BOY ADVANCE

» YEAR **2001**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£25 ($46)**



N64

» YEAR **1996**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 ($18)**

Nintendo's last cartridge-based console, competitor to the PlayStation and Saturn. Has several highly sought-after classics. Some games (like *Donkey Kong*) require the RAM expansion pack and wouldn't run without it.

- SUPER MARIO 64
- PILOTWINGS 64
- BLAST CORPS

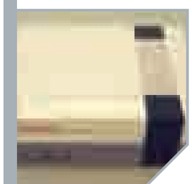


N64 DD

» YEAR **1999**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£150+ ($276+)**

Another attempt by Nintendo to incorporate disc media with one of its cartridge-based consoles. Expensive and very few games were released.

- F-ZERO EXPANSION KIT
- MARIO ARTIST SERIES
- DOSHIN THE GIANT



NES (TOASTER)

» YEAR **1985**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£15 ($28)**

The Western version of the Famicom, popular the world over. Plenty of great Nintendo classics to choose from, and it's very cheap too.

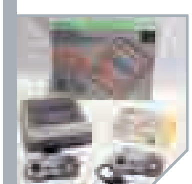


NES (DOG BONE)

» YEAR **1993**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50 ($92)**

Remodelled and improved version of the traditional NES. Region lockout was also removed, meaning all 72-pin based NES games work.

- METROID
- THE LEGEND OF ZELDA
- SUPER MARIO BROS. 3



SNES (SUPER FAMICOM IN JAPAN)

» YEAR **1990**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 ($37)**

Nintendo's successor to the NES, and one of the company's most popular machines. A retro staple with a fantastic selection of games.



SNES 2 (KNOWN AS 'JR' IN JAPAN)

» YEAR **1997**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50+ ($92+)**

Cheaper and redesigned SNES.

- SUPER METROID
- SECRET OF MANA
- SUPER MARIO WORLD



VIRTUAL BOY

» YEAR **1995**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£80 ($147)**

Nintendo's failed attempt at a pseudo Virtual Reality games system. Quite a novelty as there is nothing else like it. Be warned though, as many gamers have complained that the machine gives them headaches – never a good thing.

- INSMOUSE NO YAKATA (HP LOVECRAFT INSPIRED FPS)
- WARIO LAND
- RED ALARM

PHILIPS



CD-I 205/210/220

» YEAR **from 1992**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20+ ($37+)**

Unique system by Philips. The 200 series consists of front-loading systems, with each one having slightly different specifications.



CD-I 450/500

» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30 ($55) more with DVC**

This is the consolised version of previous models, with the latter 500 series featuring an integrated DVC.

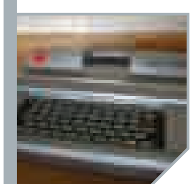
- BURN CYCLE
- HOTEL MARIO



VIDEOPAC G7000

» YEAR **1978**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 ($18)**

Popular across the world (especially Brazil and Holland) and known also as the 'Odyssey 2'.



VIDEOPAC G7400

» YEAR **1983**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 ($37)**

A successor to the G7000 that was backwards compatible.

- QUEST FOR RINGS
- PICKAXE PETE
- MUNCHKIN

SEGA



32X

» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£35 ($65) (with leads)**

Failed Mega Drive add-on, designed to enhance its capabilities.

- KNUCKLES CHAOTIX
- KOLIBRI
- DARXIDE



DREAMCAST

» YEAR **1999**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£25 ($46) depending on extras**

Sega's final hardware release. No gamer should be without it. Amazing official roster of games, plus it can emulate older systems.

- SHENMUE
- SKIES OF ARCADIA
- REZ

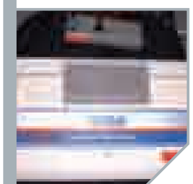


GAME GEAR

» YEAR **1991**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£15 ($28) more with extras**

Handheld by Sega, designed to compete against the Game Boy. Low battery life, but effectively a portable Master System. With add-on tuner, could also be used as a TV (as shown here).

- SHINOBI 2
- COLUMNS
- TV TUNER



SG-1000 (PLUS THE MARK II AND III)

» YEAR **1983**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20-£50 ($37 - $$92)**

Sega's first console, and a piece of history. The Mark III model would later be redesigned to become the Master System. Like the Japanese Famicom, it's much nicer than the UK version.



SC-3000

» YEAR **1983**
» RARITY
» PRICE **Approx £50 ($92)**

Computer equivalent of the SG-1000, also by Sega. Was popular in Australia and other ex-colonies. Mutually compatible with the SG-1000 as well.

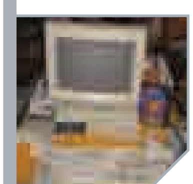


MASTER SYSTEM I/II

» YEAR **1985**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 ($18) with leads etc**

Popular Sega 8-bit console, which competed against the NES. Adapted from previous systems.

- PHANTASY STAR
- WONDER BOY 3: DRAGON'S TRAP
- CALIFORNIA GAMES



AMSTRAD MEGA PC

» YEAR **1993**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 ($18) according to eBay**

A strange hybrid between an Amstrad PC and a Mega Drive. A nice collectable oddity, though according to past eBay auctions, not a high seller.



TERADRIVE

» YEAR **1991**
» RARITY
» PRICE **Approx £100 ($184)**

Another Mega Drive computer hybrid. Released earlier than the Amstrad

hybrid, these systems have no connection. Due to being exclusive to Japan, they are seldom seen in the wild. Likely to be very expensive if you are able to find one.



MEGA DRIVE/ GENESIS I/II
» YEAR **1989+**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 ($18) depending on model**
The big daddy, Sega's most successful console and a retro classic.

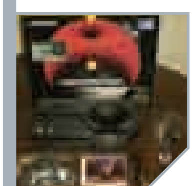


GENESIS 3
» YEAR **1998**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£35 ($65)**
Developed by Majesco. This third, cut-down model is rarer and has some compatibility issues. USA only.



NOMAD
» YEAR **1995**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£100 ($184)**
Handheld Mega Drive. Pricey, low battery life and some compatibility problems.

- RANGER-X
- THUNDER FORCE IV
- COMIX ZONE



MULTIMEGA/ WONDERMEGA/ CDX/X'EYE
» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£100+ ($184+) depending on system**
A series of different hybrid MD and MCD systems, released in the three main territories.



MEGA CD (SCD) I/II
» YEAR **1991**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50+ ($92+) depending on system**
Sega's CD add-on for the Mega Drive. Despite heavy criticism, has many excellent games.

- POPFUL MAIL
- SNATCHER
- SONIC CD



PICO
» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 ($37) more with games**
Toy computer released for young children. The games come in nice storybook-style boxes.

- SONIC'S GAMEWORLD
- ECCO JR AND THE GREAT OCEAN HUNT
- THE LION KING: ADVENTURES AT PRIDE ROCK



SATURN
» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30 ($55)**
Sega's competition against the PlayStation and N64. A real 2D powerhouse that, despite an amazing catalogue of games, never really took off.

- BURNING RANGERS
- RADIANT SILVERGUN
- PANZER DRAGOON SAGA

SINCLAIR

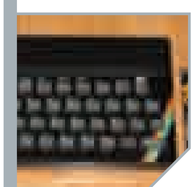


ZX80
» YEAR **1980**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£200 ($368) apparently if boxed and mint**
Very early British home computer from Sinclair. Low capability meant limited gaming possibilities. Now extremely hard to get hold of.



ZX81
» YEAR **1981**
» RARITY
» PRICE **Approx £70 ($129) if mint**
Improved home computer from Sinclair, with black and white ASCII graphics. Not as hard to source as a ZX80, but still commands a respectable price.

- 3D MONSTER MAZE
- MAZOGS
- SABOTAGE



ZX SPECTRUM 48K
» YEAR **1982**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 ($18)**



ZX SPECTRUM 128K
» YEAR **1986**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£40 ($74)**



ZX SPECTRUM+
» YEAR **1984**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£35 ($65)**



ZX SPECTRUM +2
» YEAR **1986**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£35 ($65)**



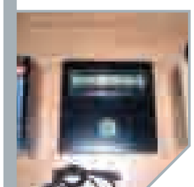
ZX SPECTRUM +3
» YEAR **1987**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£40 ($74)**
The British classic loved by many. A vast improvement over previous Sinclair computers, the Spectrum was normally compared against the C64 and Amstrad home computers, which in turn caused many playground arguments over who had the better machine.

- HEAD OVER HEELS
- 3D DEATHCHASE
- SKOOL DAZE

SNK



NEO-GEO AES
» YEAR **1991**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£150+ ($276+)**
High-powered home system by SNK. Features many high-quality arcade games. Sadly, many titles are now ridiculously expensive to purchase.



NEO-GEO MVS
» YEAR **1989**
» RARITY
» PRICE **Approx £70 ($129) multi-slot systems cost more**
High-powered arcade system by SNK, which many people prefer over the home-based AES due to lower pricing of games. (The majority of Neo-Geo titles appeared on both systems, or alternatively can be converted.)

- METAL SLUG 3
- KING OF FIGHTERS 96
- BLAZING STAR

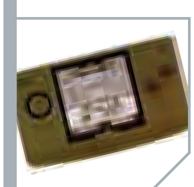


NEO-GEO CD
» YEAR **1991**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£100 ($184) varies**



NEO-GEO CDZ
» YEAR **1991**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£80+ ($147+)**
CD-based Neo-Geo systems, an attempt by SNK to lower the cost of Neo-Geo games. The CDZ is cheaper and has improved loading times. Most CD titles are ports from the AES/MVS.

- VIEWPOINT
- AGGRESSORS OF DARK COMBAT
- SAMURAI SHODOWN RPG



NEO-GEO POCKET (B/W)
» YEAR **1998**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 ($37)**



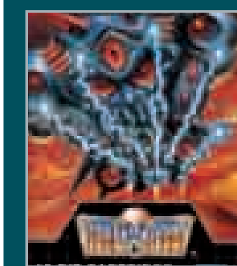
NEO-GEO POCKET COLOR
» YEAR **1999**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£35 ($65)**
Handheld Neo-Geo systems by SNK that sadly failed to compete with the Game Boy, despite featuring some great games. Still a wonderful little system, though. Be sure to buy the later colour screen model.

- FASELEI!
- CARD FIGHTERS (CAPCOM/SNK)
- MATCH OF THE MILLENNIUM (CAP VS SNK)

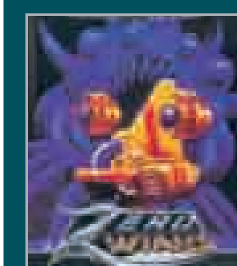
SUPER MONACO GP
Normally sells for **£2**
Ended at **No Sale**



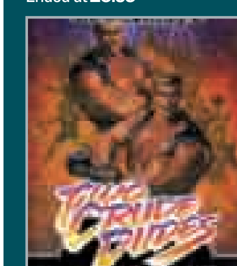
TRUXTON
Normally sells for **£10**
Ended at **£16.78**



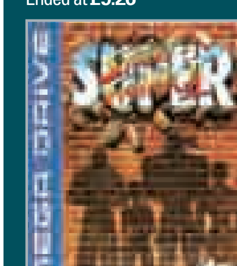
ZERO WING
Normally sells for **£6**
Ended at **£11.24**



TWO CRUDE DUDES
Normally sells for **£4**
Ended at **£8.93**



SUPER STREET FIGHTER II
Normally sells for **£7**
Ended at **£9.26**



Da da da dah!



LOAD 51

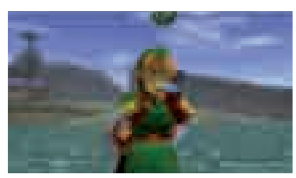
NEXT ISSUE

ON SALE 22 MAY 2008

THE HISTORY OF ZELDA

JOIN RETRO GAMER AS WE LOOK BACK AT THE MANY CHANGING FACES OF HYRULE'S GREATEST HERO







MORE EXCITING FEATURES...

- » With his fourth movie due out very soon, we take a look behind the scenes of Indy's greatest adventure, *Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis*
- » The original *Choplifter* was so good that it was eventually turned into a Sega coin-op. Dan Gorlin recalls the creation of the original Apple II game
- » Find out why Atari's excellent 1983 coin-op hit *Crystal Castles* was so much more than just '*Pac-Man* in isometric 3D'

eMag

RETRO GAMER LIVES

DARRAN JONES (current editor of Retro Gamer)

Strider (Arcade)



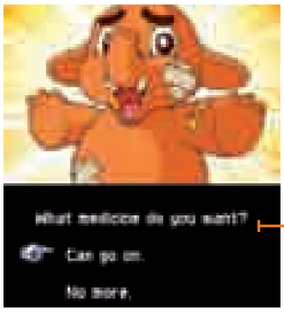
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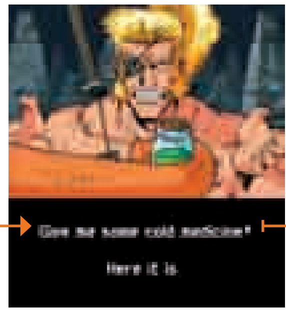
Every **RG** reader knows about my obsession with *Strider*, but not everyone knows why I love it so. When I was a kid I was shy, introverted and tiny, a world away from the huge, loud-mouthed git I am now. Picked on by other kids due to my weirdness – I liked reading and bird watching and hated sports – I'd retreat into videogames and shun my peers. When I found Strider I saw something in him that I always wanted to be. Here was someone heroic, athletic and not afraid to tackle anything that got in his way. I loved it and got damn good at it. My skills would draw crowds who would watch in awe, as I completed the game over and over again. I still used to get beaten up, but at least I had my weekends to look forward to.

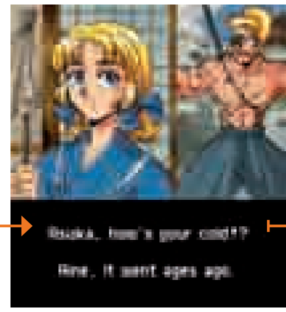


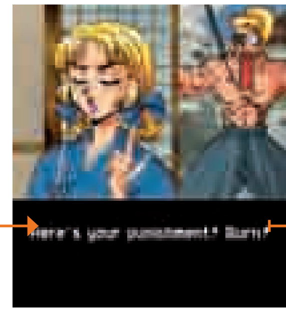
GUNBIRD 2

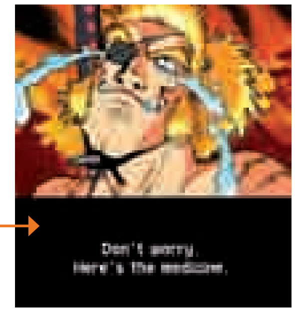
There are tons of endings to be discovered in the overhead Parodious-style blaster Gunbird 2, but this issue we're taking a gander at the one-eyed samurai Aine's weird and burning ending











SCREEN 1
When you finish *Gunbird 2* you're greeted by an elephant that gives you the choice of two lame medicines. Out of sheer curiosity we've opted to roll with the 'Can go on' medicine… which apparently translates as 'Cold Medicine'.

SCREEN 2
So, our hero turns up to his beloved's house with the ailment in hand and, being half-dressed, he thinks that after blasting through droves of enemies and a trumpet-playing demigod, he can secure himself a night of serious loving.

SCREEN 3
However, it appears that our hero was about two weeks late in returning with the goods. Incensed by his tardiness and lack of upper-body garments, his girlfriend throws a tantrum and overreacts… big time.

SCREEN 4
She ties him to a stake and decides to raise the city to the ground (talk about blowing things out of proportion). So, as the city burns to a crisp our hero is forced to melt on a stick. To add insult to eminent injury, he bursts into tears.

SCREEN 5
He then says, 'Don't worry. Here's the medicine.' At this point he's clearly gone completely out of his mind. What a sad and tragic end to this game – actually, more importantly, what a morose, bleak finale to our 50th issue.